VISIT…

THE DIRECTORS

Interviews with

ROBERT ALTMAN • TIM BURTON • ROGER CORMAN

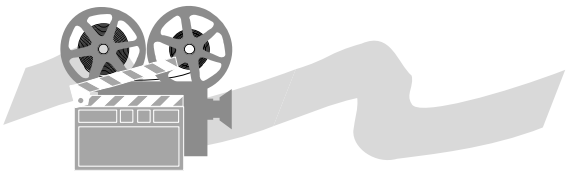
WES CRAVEN • CLINT EASTWOOD • BARRY LEVINSON • PAUL SCHRADER

ALAN PARKER • MARTIN SCORSESE • STEVEN SPIELBERG

ROBERT J. EMERY

The Directors—Take Three

This page intentionally left blank



The Directors—Take Three

Robert J. Emery

ALLWORTH PRESS
NEW YORK

© 2003 Big Show Entertainment, Inc.

All rights reserved. Copyright under Berne Copyright Convention, Universal Copyright Convention, and Pan-American Copyright Convention. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

08 07 06 05 04 03 5 4 3 2 1

Published by Allworth Press
An imprint of Allworth Communications, Inc.
10 East 23rd Street, New York, NY 10010

Emmy® is a registered trademark of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. Academy Awards® and Oscar® are registered trademarks and servicemarks of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

Photos provided courtesy of Media Entertainment and the directors interviewed.

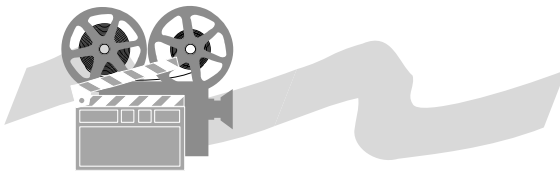
Cover design by Douglas Design Associates
Interior design and page composition/typography by Rachel Reiss

ISBN: 1-58115-245-0

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data:
Emery, Robert J.
The directors : take three / Robert J. Emery.
p. cm. — (The Directors)
Includes index.
ISBN 1-58115-245-0
1. Motion picture producers and directors—United States—Interviews.
I. Title. II. Series.

PN1998.2 .E495 2003
791.43'0233'092273—dc21
2002151494

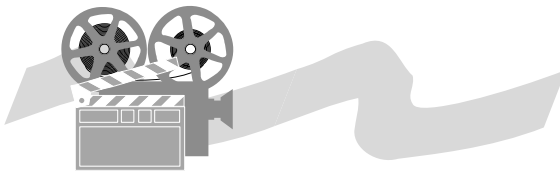
Printed in Canada



Contents

	Note from the Author	vii
1.	The Films of Robert Altman	1
2.	The Films of Martin Scorsese	27
3	The Films of Steven Spielberg	57
4.	The Films of Clint Eastwood	81
5.	The Films of Wes Craven	99
6.	The Films of Roger Corman	117
7.	The Films of Alan Parker	133
8.	The Films of Paul Schrader	155
9.	The Films of Tim Burton	175
10.	The Films of Barry Levinson	197
	Index	221
	About the Author	229

For Michael and Zachary



Note from the Author

Some years ago I created the award-winning television series *The Directors*, which is now in its fifth season on the Encore Cable Network and also runs in more than fifty-five countries around the world. As of this writing, we have completed fifty-two episodes and have twenty-six more in production. *The Directors* represents the most extensive series of programs ever assembled on film directors and has come to represent a forum where the art of filmmaking is discussed by directors, actors, and others involved in the filmmaking process.

This is the third volume in a series of books I have assembled based on the interviews conducted with individual directors. Each TV episode runs one hour and each director is interviewed anywhere between two and four hours. Unfortunately, only about thirty to thirty-five minutes of those interviews make it into each edited episode. This book recreates most of the original interviews.

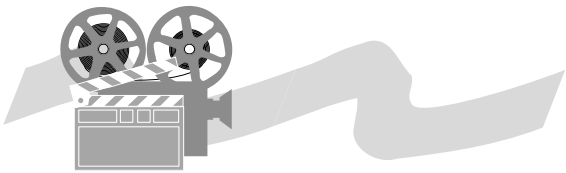
Most film directors will tell you that they consider it a privilege to do the work they do. To get up in the morning and to join a large group of professionals who are ready, willing, and able to tell the story you set out to tell has to be exciting. Then, win, lose, or draw, that vision ends up on the big screen for audiences to see and often judge. Presented here are some of the best at what they do, who were willing to sit down and give of their time in an effort to remove, or in some case enhance, the mystery of making movies. My hat is off to all of them.

I sincerely thank all of the wonderfully talented directors who participated and gave of their valuable time, along with actors, actresses, writers, producers, and cinematographers who appeared in the television series as guests. A very special thanks to the American Film Institute, who helped make all of this possible, and to my friend Milt Felson, who was so instru-

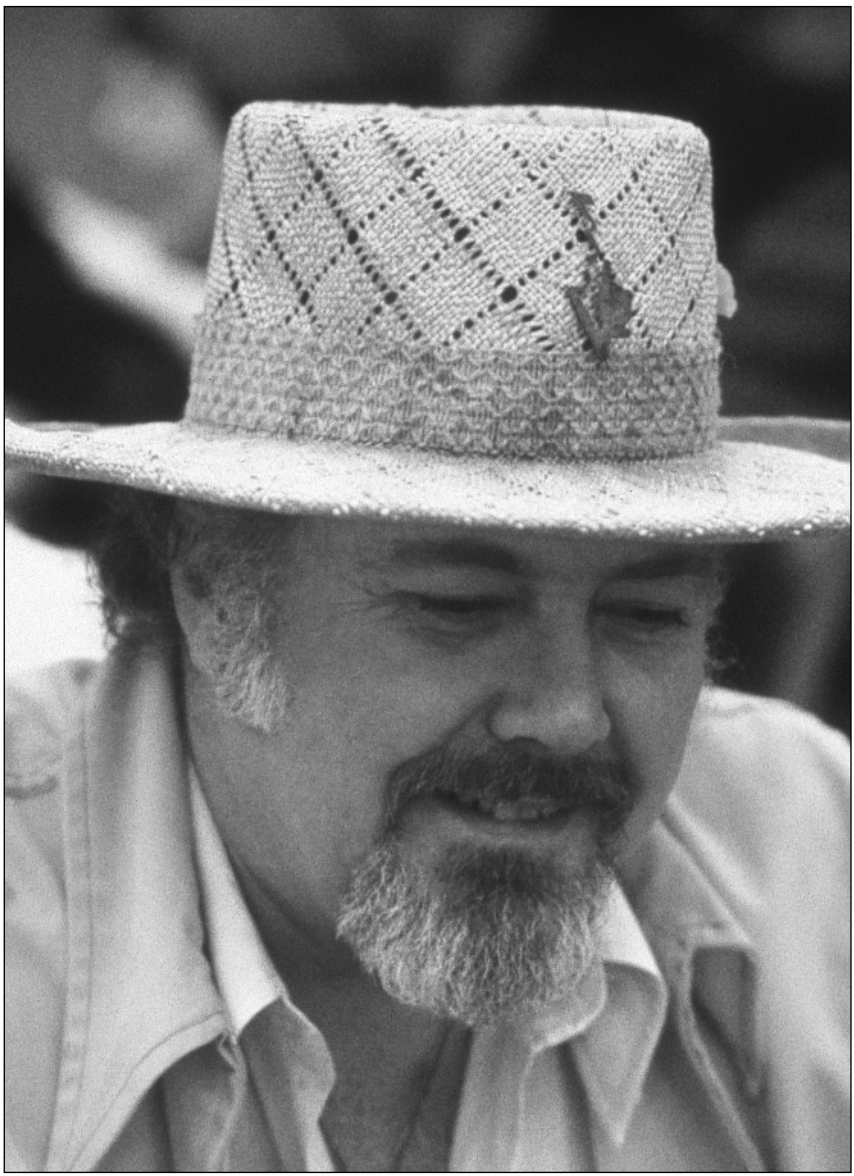
mental in getting the original television series off the ground. None of this would have come about without his expertise and industry connections. My thanks to Lisa Bentsen, who proofed and made corrections to this volume as I was writing.

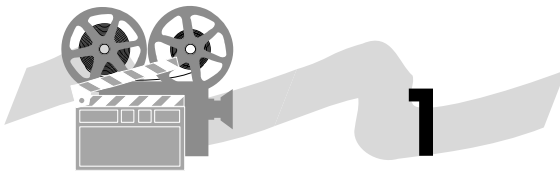
In transcribing the on-camera interviews into this book, some editing was necessary. However, I have retained as much of the original interviews as possible.

—Robert J. Emery



The Directors—Take Three





1

The Films of Robert Altman

The maverick filmmaker known as Robert Altman was born on February 20, 1925, in Kansas City, Missouri, to B. C. and Helen Altman. He entered a Catholic school at age six and spent a short time at a Catholic high school before moving on to Rockhurst High School. He attended Wentworth Military Academy in Lexington, Missouri, through junior college, before enlisting in the Air Force in 1945, where he became a B-24 pilot in World War II. After his military discharge he did some writing—mostly magazine stories, radio scripts, and some film treatments—before landing in Kansas City making industrial films for the Calvin Company. After making his first feature film, *The Delinquents*, in 1957, he moved to California and began directing television series episodes such as *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*, *Combat*, and *Bonanza*. His big break came with the 1970 release of *M*A*S*H*. Although he had directed other films, he was not the producer's first choice—fifteen other directors had turned the project down before it was finally given to Altman. The film won over audiences, made money, and went on to become one of the most successful television series ever, which Altman remains bitter about to this day.

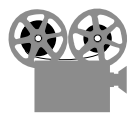
His films quickly showed that he favored more substance than technique, staging scenes that favored performances rather than fancy camera work. He became known for overlapping dialogue, where several characters speak at once. He often used the same actors from film to film, including Shelley Duvall, John Schuck, Rene Auberjonois, the late Bert Remsen, Lily Tomlin, Keith Carradine, Sally Kellerman, Michael Murphy, and Jennifer Jason Leigh (whose father, Vic Morrow, Altman often directed in the TV series *Combat*).

About working in television he once said: "I've about had it—the agencies, the winking, the networks, the ratings. Anyone who thinks TV is an art

medium is crazy—it's an advertising medium." Lucky for film fans, Altman spends most of his time making movies for the big screen.

The time allotted for this interview did not allow Altman to discuss all of his films.

> *He marches to his own tune. And he's going to make his picture and that's that. Nobody's going to tell him how to make it. Nobody. So, when you make the deal with Bob, you have to know that going in. I don't care who it is.*
>
> *Jack Lemmon—Actor*



The Conversation

I was born in Kansas City. I lived there for eighteen years. And then I went into the Air Force and I became a B-24 pilot and I went overseas to the South Pacific. Before I went over I was stationed at Riverside March Field, sixty miles from L.A., and I used to come down here for parties. I had two aunts and an uncle who lived here. The first thing that interested me about films was the girls. I thought it was a neat business to be in.

When the war was over I took my discharge here in California and I began writing . . . I started writing overseas actually—long letters that became little incidents that I would tell to certain people. So, when I came back I stayed with a guy named George W. George who was the son of Lou Goldberg, the cartoonist. I moved into the same house with him. He lived downstairs and I lived upstairs. George's uncle was a film director. And so George and I started writing movies. The first one was a story treatment we did called *Christmas Eve*, which we sold. It was made into a film with Ann Harding, George Brent, and George Raft. Then I wrote a couple of other screenplays that were made into films. I really didn't write the screenplay. I wrote treatments and stories that people bought.

Then I went into radio writing, which I liked a lot but I could never get screenplay writing right, you know. So, I decided to go back to New York and try writing some plays. On the way to New York I stopped in Kansas

City, and I ran into a guy who was a film director at an industrial film company called Calvin, and he told me he could get me a job there. So, he took me over and introduced me to the people. I lied a lot about my experience and what I had previously done. Anyway, I got hired as a film director at $250 a month. I stayed there three or four years and then I went back to California and tried getting into the business and failed. I went back to Kansas City.

His First Feature Film Effort

I was directing some television in Kansas City when I made a little feature called *The Delinquents* for $63,000. I wrote and directed it and produced it and did all that stuff. Alfred Hitchcock saw that film, and for some reason he liked it. I saw it and I don't like it very much, but he did. I went in for an interview and they hired me to work on the half-hour television series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents.* That was my first real professional job as a director.

After that I just went from one television show to the other. I did a series called *Whirlybirds.* It was a syndicated half-hour show about two guys and a helicopter. I must have done forty of them. We shot them in two-and-a-half days. I'd work straight for three weeks and turn out six shows. On Monday you'd start at noon and on Wednesday by lunch you were finished with that show and you started another one after lunch. Doing those shows was wonderful experience.

Countdown (1968)

James Caan; Joanna Cook Moore; Robert Duvall; Barbara Baxley; Charles Aidman; Steve Ihnat; Michael Murphy; Ted Knight; Stephen Coit; John Rayner; Charles Irving; Bobby Riha.

The next feature film I did was for Warner Bros. They had a low-budget program that was run by Bill Conrad, the actor who produced these films for them in the range of a million and a quarter dollars. The first one I did was a film called *Countdown,* with Jimmy Caan, Robert Duvall, and Joanna Moore. By that time I had done so much television and I had a pretty good reputation. I had produced the *Combat* series and I did the pilot for *The Gallant Men*, which was another war series, and I had done *Bonanza.* So, Conrad offered me these cheap, low-budget features and I jumped at it.

When I did *Countdown*, Jack Warner was in Europe the whole time. My film caused quite a stir on the Warner Bros. lot because everybody thought it was great and that I was really good. Everyone was talking about this big career that I was going to have. They were telling me about scripts that were coming up at Warner Bros. and blah, blah, blah—all that Hollywood talk, you know. But I felt pretty arrogant about it. It so happens that on the last day of shooting, Jack Warner came back from Europe and came on the set. I had gone to the toilet, so I missed him. I finished up the shooting and went home and celebrated. The next morning I got a call from one of the producers who worked for Conrad and he told me not to come in because they were not going to let me in the gate. He told me that Jack Warner pulled all the dailies and looked at them and he just went crazy. He said, "That fool has actors talking at the same time." He was so upset he barred me from the lot. I told them I had the right to come in and edit my film and they said that if I persist in doing that, as soon as I turned in my cut nobody would look at it because Jack Warner doesn't like you. So, that was my feature career at that time.

That Cold Day in the Park (1969)

Sandy Dennis; Michael Burns; Susanne Benton; David Garfield; Luana Anders; Michael Murphy; Edward Greenhalgh; Linda Sorenson.

I went back and did more television but was always trying to develop new films. The next film I did was called *That Cold Day in the Park,* which was financed by Donald Factor, from the Max Factor family. We went to Canada and made that film for a million dollars or so.

Sandy Dennis, who starred in the film, was wonderful. You have to understand that on all of my films my first two or three ideas are usually awful. I have to get past those. So I would give Sandy an idea, and she would tell me that it was awful and why we couldn't do it. She was usually right and we had a great time together making that film.

> *M*A*S*H was a project that I understood nobody really wanted to do, and it was purely Bob Altman's vision.*
>
> *Elliott Gould—Actor*

M*A*S*H (1970)

Donald Sutherland; Elliott Gould; Tom Skerritt; Sally Kellerman; Robert Duvall; Roger Bowen; Rene Auberjonois; David Arkin; Jo Ann Pflug; Gary Berghoff; Fred Williamson; Michael Murphy; Indus Arthur; Ken Prymus; Bobby Troup; Kim Atwood; Timothy Brown; John Schuck.

Then came *M*A*S*H*. The producer was a guy named Ingo Preminger, who was director Otto Preminger's brother. Ingo had been an agent out here and he had this screenplay by Ring Lardner, Jr. My agent sold Preminger on letting me direct it. I had just finished editing *That Cold Day in the Park* and I didn't like the script of *M*A*S*H* at all. But I had been working for about four years developing a project called *The Chicken and the Hawk*, which was about World War I flyers. When I read the *M*A*S*H* script I thought I could do a lot of the stuff I wanted to do in the style that I wanted to use in *Chicken and the Hawk*, so I agreed to direct *M*A*S*H*. The screenplay was about Hawkeye and Trapper John and Hot Lips, and the operating scenes were written to be very graphic. I thought if we could be farcical with this thing and yet make those operating scenes make you hold your breath, it might just work. So, I went in and did it.

We were shooting on the back lot, and Fox had two other war movies in production at the same time—*Tora, Tora, Tora* and *Patton*. The dailies were coming in on these films all the time. From the very beginning I got very harsh notes about my dailies, that people were too dirty and the uniforms were too sloppy. Let's just say that they were very dissatisfied with the dailies. But you've got to remember, ours was only a $3.5 million film and the other two were pretty expensive films. Anyway, we kept doing what we were doing, and pretty soon the notes started going to the *Patton* and the *Tora, Tora, Tora* people telling them that their uniforms were starting to look a little too shiny and new, and weren't those guys supposed to be in a war? And so, we kind of educated them, in a funny way. But I knew that I was in jeopardy over there. And so we did everything to keep out of the limelight. I came in under schedule and under budget. I was very careful about that so that they wouldn't zero in on me because their attention was on these other two big films. Otherwise, I don't think I would have gotten away with most of what we got away with.

I'm forever in the shower, you know, no matter what the occasion. But it was part of the film's plot point in the movie. And so I said, well Bob, could I at least look pretty?

Sally Kellerman—Actress

*M*A*S*H* was about the Korean War, but we shot it in the middle of the Vietnam War, and I wanted it to be about the Vietnam War. But the brass was adamant that it couldn't be that. When they saw the picture cut together they made us put a little disclaimer to say that this was in Korea. So, it's on the legend in the beginning of the film. Otherwise, you wouldn't know where you were.

When it became a television series I was very upset about that. I didn't nor wouldn't have anything to do with it. Let me say this: To direct *M*A*S*H* I was paid $75,000. They kept promising me a piece of the profits but I never got it. *M*A*S*H* to date has made over a billion dollars, if you take into consideration the television series. I mean, well over a billion dollars, and God knows when it's going to end. They did what, twelve years of those episodes? I just was philosophically and morally against that. They brought an Asian war to the television audience every Sunday night, and no matter what platitudes they said or they would make, it really comes down to the message that the enemy was Asian. And I just thought that was bad—I still do. I've never seen one of those episodes all the way through. It's impossible not to have seen part of it, just flipping around the television set because it's on. But I was very unhappy about all that. And I've said enough about it.

I wasn't afraid of anything because I didn't know any better, and that's how I got the part. Bob discovered me, and he's responsible for me being an actress.

Shelley Duvall—Actress

Brewster McCloud (1970)

Rene Auberjonois; Bud Cort; Shelley Duvall; Corey Fischer; Dean Goss; Margaret Hamilton; Angelin Johnson; Stacy Keach; Sally Kellerman; Michael Murphy; Bert Remsen; Jennifer Salt; John Schuck; David Welch; William Windom; George Wood.

After *M*A*S*H* became a big, big hit, I was suddenly a desirable commodity. They were throwing scripts at me. Lou Adler, who's in the music

business, had this script called *Brewster McCloud*. I don't know if that was the title then, but I wanted to make a film out of it. When I first read it, I didn't think it was that good. But I felt that if we did this to it and we did that to it, it might be kind of fun to do. So, I talked myself into it, and then I rewrote it totally. Then we found out that the original author had sold it to Adler with the condition that nobody could share the writing credit. So, we went ahead and made my picture but he got the screen credit.

They released *Brewster* the same year that *M*A*S*H* was released. *M*A*S*H* was released in January of 1970 and *Brewster* was released in December, I think. So, I had two films out that year, and they both were on the top-ten lists. *Brewster* was a very, very bizarre film. And I don't know that it would have ever been highly successful with a broad audience.

You know, each time that I start a film, while I'm doing it, while I'm editing, by the time it's finished, I think that it's the greatest thing since hash. I just feel that everybody is going to love the film. It's going to be a smashing success. It's going to win Academy Awards. And you know, they don't. But, it's always a surprise to me. Even today, it's the same thing—I'm shocked by the success of some of these films, and I'm shocked by the lack of success of others. I finally decided that I have deluded myself all these years as to what this business is all about. It's just that I don't understand it. But I've never gone into making a film or finished film that I didn't think was going be knockout successful.

McCabe & Mrs. Miller (1971)

Warren Beatty; Julie Christie; Rene Auberjonois; William Devane; John Schuck; Cory Fischer; Bert Remsen; Shelley Duvall; Keith Carradine; Michael Murphy; Antony Holland; Hugh Millais; Manfred Schulz; Jace Van Der Veen; Jackie Crossland; Elizabeth Murphy; Carey Lee McKenzie.

I am always asked about the sound on *McCabe & Mrs. Miller.* It's one of the first questions I get. I had a guy from Vancouver do our sound and unfortunately he was not very experienced, so the sound was not good to begin with. Warren Beatty was furious and accused me of ruining his career. Warren never mentions *McCabe* when he talks about his career. He got very upset

about the sound and went back in to Warner Bros. and insisted that he loop or rerecord most of his stuff. I didn't have any part of that.

Producer David Foster brought it to me because I was the hot guy on the block at the time. Everybody knew that story. I mean, it had the three heavies—the giant, the half-breed, and the kid. It had the whore with a heart of gold. Everybody knew those characters and that plot. What I was able to do was to deal with the detailing of it. For instance, I wondered why back then they always wore those big [cowboy] hats? They always had big hats on in those old photos. It turns out that in the 1850s and the 1860s photographic plates were very expensive. It's not like today, where you have a roll of thirty-six and you can go out there and just shoot away.

So, a photographer would go out and take a picture. He takes a picture of a guy who happens to be wearing a big hat. Later on, the movies came along and everybody looked at those pictures and thought, well that must be authentic. So, we had everybody wearing those big hats. But it didn't really happen that way. So, I had Warner Bros. send me up a truckload of just old period clothes, not cowboy stuff. I got all of my actors together and told them to pick out the stuff they wanted to wear. Everybody got one coat, one pair of pants, two shirts, a vest or sweater, one hat, and so on. We cast people with accents that were Scottish and German, because these people that went west, they didn't all talk like they were from Texas. Most of them came from Europe. They wore clothes that they wore in Europe. All these actors were running around trying stuff on and they'd come to me for approval. You could see they'd pick the stuff that was torn and tattered and had, they thought, the most character. Everybody got it.

We literally built that town as we were shooting. We had the saloon with the bridge on it. That was built before we started. But as the picture opens, there was nothing but mines and the beginnings of the town. And in the background, you'd see these frame buildings going up. So, it seemed like a new thing but the plot wasn't. It was the standard old thing.

> *Bob said that David Lean waited for a year for the snow in* Dr. Zhivago, *and this was a million-dollar snow, so he was going to go for it.*
>
> *Rene Auberjonois—Actor*

The weather was the biggest problem. It rains up there all the time. We

were constantly shooting in a light, wet mist. I didn't want to just keep that look for the whole film. So, I decided I would add a big windstorm to the story. There's nothing worse to work in than wind. It's just the worst. I had five or six wind machines sent up from Warner Bros. And I was just going to have that whole scene in the end when they are chasing Warren take place in this windstorm.

The night before we were going to shoot that scene that ends with burning the church, I was shooting a shot with Julie Christie and it was bitterly cold. It just kept getting colder. Our special effects guy told me that the temperature had dropped to 29 degrees. I told them to get hoses and wet everything down—let the hoses run all night. Everybody thought I was crazy but they did it. Well, the next morning it looked beautiful. I mean, the trees had this frozen rain on them and drippings and ice. And there was a light snow on the ground and it kind of covered the ice. It was gorgeous.

Now, we had shot everything else in sequence pretty much, so this is all we had to shoot. I went over to Warren Beatty's trailer and found that he wasn't even dressed yet. He didn't see the point in shooting in the ice and snow because he was sure it would melt before we could finish the whole sequence and we would have to start all over again. I explained to him that we had nothing else to shoot and he reluctantly agreed.

We finally began shooting and it continued to snow. A member of the crew could walk through and leave footprints and by the time he got a hundred yards they were covered with fresh snow. We always had this constant virgin snow look. But I was terrified that it was going to break at any moment. We got right up to where we burned the church and the temperature began to climb and it all started to melt. By the time we finished that church-burning scene, which was the end of shooting for us, the snow was completely gone. So, it was just one of those miraculous strokes of luck where it stayed there long enough for us to finish.

Thieves Like Us (1974)

Keith Carradine; Shelley Duvall; John Schuck; Bert Remsen; Louise Fletcher; Ann Latham; Tom Skerritt; Al Scott; John Roper; Mary Waits; Joan Tewkesbury.

Nashville (1975)

David Arkin; Barbara Baxley; Ned Beatty; Karen Black; Ronee Blakley; Timothy Brown; Keith Carradine; Geraldine Chaplin; Robert DoQui; Shelley Duvall; Allen Garfield; Henry Gibson; Scott Glenn; Jeff Goldblum; Barbara Harris; David Hayward; Michael Murphy; Cristina Raines; Bert Remsen; Lily Tomlin; Gwen Welles; Keenan Wynn; Elliott Gould; Julie Christie.

I wanted to make a film called *Thieves Like Us*. I just loved the book. I cast Keith Carradine, John Schuck, Shelley Duvall, and Burt Remsen, my dear friend who just died two days ago. So, we went down to Mississippi to do this. I gave the book to Joan Tewkesbury and told her to just write the screenplay as close to the book as possible, and she did. Now, in order to get the film done and to get the million-and-a-half dollars or whatever it took to do *Thieves Like Us,* I had to promise United Artists that I would do a country-western movie. They had a script that they wanted to do with Tom Jones. I told them that I wouldn't do that script, but I would do a country-and-western thing if they financed *Thieves*. So, we struck a deal.

So when I left for Mississippi to do *Thieves* I told Joan to go down to Nashville and come up with some story ideas. I told her that I didn't have any ideas but I had to deliver them at least a screenplay about country music. So, she went. She goes to Nashville, gets into a cab, and promptly ends up in a big traffic jam on her way into town. She was there for three hours, and that's where our movie opens. She went to the Exit Inn and met some character there, and a black guy came and sat with her. He became the Bob character. We built the whole film from her little journey around there. That became the basis for *Nashville*. That's how it happened.

A lot of the actors wrote their own songs. Keith had written two or three songs. He wrote "It Don't Worry Me," which was the finale. He wrote "I'm Easy" and maybe one other one. The music became a character and it was part of the dressing of the film. I saw *Nashville* not long ago and I'm still very pleased with it.

Buffalo Bill and the Indians, Or Sitting Bull's History Lesson (1976)

Paul Newman; Joel Grey; Kevin McCarthy; Harvey Keitel; Allan F. Nicholls; Geraldine Chaplin; John Considine; Bert Remsen; Denver Pyle; Will Sampson; Shelley Duvall; Burt Lancaster; Pat McCormick.

I got Paul Newman to play Buffalo Bill and then built a big ensemble company around him. When we went up to Calgary, Canada, we found a space that was on the Stoney Indian Reservation and it had this river running through it. It was beautiful. It was a long drive from Calgary but we built this compound that was to be Buffalo Bill's with the show arena and all the tents, and inside of those tents we hid all of our necessary equipment. You could look in every direction and there was nothing but the great outdoors. So, it was quite an ingenious camp that we built. All of the cabling went underground and we hid our generator in a tent.

We got all the actors up there and we started rehearsing, and every day the actors had to go ride for an hour and get used to the horses. One day Geraldine Chaplin, who was playing Annie Oakley, and five or six other actors came back from their daily ride. They were waiting while one of them opened a fence, and the girth on Geraldine's saddle just broke and she fell off and broke her shoulder. So, immediately everybody wants to know who I am going to recast her with. Well, the hell with that, I said I wasn't going to recast her and she could just work with a broken shoulder and I would work it into the script. I figured that Annie Oakley could fall off a horse and break her shoulder just like anyone else. Now, because Geraldine broke her right shoulder, that meant she would have to shoot left-handed, which was historically incorrect. But it was a great boost, I think, to the whole cast and crew. They felt good that we didn't throw Geraldine out just because of an accident. It was probably our fault in the first place.

We used long lenses on just about everything we shot. For example, Sitting Bull's entrance was five miles off the main road down to our camp on a trail. And I had them start out of sight with maybe a hundred people, horses, and wagons as they're bringing Sitting Bull into the camp. It took them twenty minutes to make that trip. It was a long way. I had two or three cameras going all the time and we did it twice. As a result we had film stacked up

to the ceiling. The day we were going to watch those dailies is the day that producer Dino DeLaurentiis decides to visit the location with one of his big backers from Italy. So, our dailies that day ran six or seven hours. They were nothing but these long-lens shots of Sitting Bull riding in. Well, it was a disaster. Dino says something about how they are not riding very fast, and I try to explain to him that all that footage won't be in the film.

In *Buffalo Bill* we used a lot of the color red since I had control of all the visuals. In other words, I wasn't like in *Brewster McCloud* or in *Nashville*. We were just shooting so many people. I mean we'd have a group of Shriners coming by with the red high hats on and everything. I had no control over the color. So, in those films that's the way we shot it: garish. When we did *McCabe* or *Buffalo Bill*, we had control of everything. In *Buffalo Bill* we used red and yellow and black, which were the colors off the main BUFFALO BILL'S WILD WEST SHOW sign in the camp.

Popeye (1980)

Robin Williams; Shelley Duvall; Ray Walston; Paul Dooley; Paul Smith; Richard Libertini; Donald Moffat; MacIntyre Dixon; Roberta Maxwell; Donovan Scott; Wesley Ivan Hurt; Linda Hunt; Bill Irwin.

I liked that film, but the Island of Malta was a tough place to be. We had to bring in everything we needed and we completely built that town. Some of the crew was there for a year without leaving. I was there probably nine months. The actual shooting was four months or so. We had a hell of a time getting Popeye's arm prosthetics correct. So, I started shooting all the scenes where he had his coat on. I shot those over and over and over again and shot everything I could think of while we were having a new set of arms being made in Italy. The American special effects crew couldn't do it and they quit and left, a little embarrassed, I think, that they couldn't do what they said they were going to do. The Italians finally came in and got it right.

It was Robin Williams's first film and he was terrific. He was very, very inventive. But he was not trying to Robin Williams it up. I really had to tell him that he was playing it too tight. I told him to improvise more, that we had plenty of film to waste, so improvise through it. He loosened up and he was great.

Some TV Stuff Along the Way

To me, they were just short movies. *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial*, I took the actual play, the Samuel French version, and that was my script. Because what we were doing was neither television nor movies. We were doing a court-martial. And I shot it that way. I liked the idea of doing the two Harold Pinter plays. ABC came to me and said, just do anything for us. We'll give you two hours. And I said, okay. I'll do this Harold Pinter play. And they said that would be great. And they read the script and they called me up and they said, "Is this what you're gonna do?" And I said, yeah. And they asked me what it was about. And I said it's about real estate. But they were quite perplexed when they turned me loose on a couple of Harold Pinter plays. I mean they should have known better.

Vincent & Theo (1990)

Adrian Brine; Anne Canovas; Jean-Pierre Castaldi; Bernadette Giraud; Hans Kesting; Jean-Francois Perrier; Paul Rhys; Tim Roth; Johanna ter Steege; Vincent Vallier; Jip Wijngaarden; Wladimir Yordanoff.

This project was financed by one of the British TV networks. It was to be a four-hour television thing. That's how it began. My dear friend Norman Corwin wrote the first van Gogh thing that Kirk Douglas did; that was called *Lust for Life*. It was from the Irving Stone book. I don't know what I did that was different in *Vincent & Theo*, other than I had about fifty of van Gogh's paintings made by various people. We did almost his full catalog. We never shot straight in on a painting. It's always an angle you're looking at, so there's no way to really tell how accurate it was.

The main reason I wanted those paintings was so that I could have them rained on, stepped on, and thrown off in the corner and have the cat shit on them. Nobody seems to care that he didn't sell a painting in his whole life except for one to his brother. But people say oh my God, it's a van Gogh! It's worth $63 million! It'll take four of us to carry it out of the room! And be careful when you put it in the car. Well, you don't act that way about a Robert Altman painting. Hell, just throw them in the back seat and hope that something doesn't puncture them. That's what I say.

From the beginning I wanted to get a feature out of the deal, but first I had to do the four-hour television thing. It's really not four hours, more like

three hours, forty minutes. We shot all of van Gogh's life in Holland and when we edited the feature film out of it we went more into the story between Vincent and his brother, Theo. And if you liked the feature film cut, then the four-hour version is fun. The four-hour version was shown on television in England and other places in Europe, but never here in the United States.

> *I did it out of respect for Altman's record. He's a creative person and he kind of works on instincts and improvisation, which I believe in. I was flattered that he asked and I thought it would be fun.*
>
> *Rod Steiger—Actor*

The Player (1992)

Tim Robbins; Greta Scacchi; Fred Ward; Whoopi Goldberg; Peter Gallagher; Brion James; Cynthia Stevenson; Vincent D'Onofrio; Dean Stockwell; Sydney Pollack; Lyle Lovett; Dina Merrill; and a whole slew of celebrities playing themselves.

The producers who saw the van Gogh film approached me and asked me to direct *The Player.* I had *Short Cuts* prepared but hadn't been able to raise the money to do it. So, I had this window in there and I decided, why not do *The Player*? I got the idea of using real people in it, so I started calling people—Bruce Willis, Julia Roberts, Burt Reynolds—all playing themselves in the thing. I'd call them up and say we're going to be shooting at so-and-so tomorrow, can you be there? What really worked in *The Player* is people like Malcolm McDowell and Burt Reynolds playing themselves but they really had an acid attitude toward the actors playing the fictional characters. That seemed to work very well.

The reason I did that long shot in the opening of the film is because I had to set up the movie right from the start. I wanted to set up all these characters to tell you the kind of film you were going to be looking at. So, I actually built a model of the little studio area that we had there. I put in a model crane. And just figured out the various places we could reach with that crane. A lot of people think it's handheld, but it wasn't. It just seemed to me it was a way of getting the audience's attention, and since it was a film about film, I thought all that worked.

One very funny thing that happened is that my son Steve Altman, who

has been my production designer ever since *Fool For Love*, came up with that logo that we put up on the side of the building that says MOVIES—NOW MORE THAN EVER. When I asked him what that meant he said it meant nothing, just something he thought up. Well, two years later that was NBC's new slogan—"NBC, now more than ever." So, you got me where all this stuff comes from.

Short Cuts (1993)

Andie MacDowell; Bruce Davison; Jack Lemmon; Lane Cassidy; Julianne Moore; Matthew Modine; Anne Archer; Fred Ward; Jennifer Jason Leigh; Chris Penn; Joseph C. Hopkins; Josette Maccario; Lili Taylor; Robert Downey, Jr.; Tim Robbins; Lily Tomlin.

I had that script very thoroughly written because I didn't have those actors at the same time all the time. I ended up doing the earthquake scene about eight times. I'd have to get, like, Lily Tomlin and Tom Waits and shoot their stuff, then I'd shoot and fold in whoever interacted with them. Nobody worked more than six or seven days, which really allowed me to get that film done, you know, because we didn't have a lot of money to work with. It was a style that I'd always wanted to do, multiple stories that seem to interact. But as I say, it was all in the script. There is less improvisation in *Short Cuts* than in probably any film I've done.

I was on an airplane and I read Raymond Carver's book. I just was so moved by the way he told stories. What he told and what he didn't tell, you know, and how he made a story out of the slightest little incident. I was just amazed by that. I thought to myself that this is what we should do in film. We don't have to have those big endings or those big high points. We should take these people and just do a piece of their lives. We had to add some stories. They're not all Raymond Carver stories. Some of them are my stories. We just laced them all together and then we filled in the story with Frances McDormand and Peter Gallagher, with pieces like where he tore her house up and things like that. That really happened to a friend of mine about forty years ago. He was an airline pilot off on a trip, and his girlfriend spent two days in his apartment just destroying everything. I mean she cut his neckties up in little pieces and she took his records and boiled them. I mean she just thoroughly destroyed this place. So, things like that happen and I put them into my films.

The Gingerbread Man (1998)

Kenneth Branagh; Embeth Davidtz; Robert Downey, Jr.; Daryl Hannah; Robert Duvall; Tom Berenger; Famke Janssen.

I had never done a thriller at the time this was offered to me. Kenneth Branagh was attached to it, and although I had never met him I was a big fan of his. I think he's a terrific actor. I called him and he said he wanted to do it if we can make his character a flawed hero.

Let's go back to the beginning. The only reason they wanted to make it was because John Grisham had written a screenplay. They went ahead with it because they thought they could pass it off as a hot John Grisham thing. So, when Branagh said yes, I said yes, and I just sat down and rewrote it so it dealt with this flawed hero. In the end I liked that picture a lot.

We kept a kind of conventional, satisfactory wrap-up ending to it. When the studio tested the film they liked it and got all fired up over it. The head guy of Polygram Pictures comes to me and says this is a great film. We've got a company airplane and anytime you ever want to go to Europe or anything, our planes are at your disposal. And I told him that was nice, thank you and blah, blah, blah. Then I finished the film and they took it out and tested it with audiences and it didn't test badly, but it didn't test well. All the comments that came back were about the morality of this character who was married and screws this other girl on the first night he meets her. That's what started all the problems, of course. I told them that they couldn't have a test audience come in and give me a lesson in morality. I told them not to pay attention to that audience.

So, they wanted to test it again. It got exactly the same reaction the second time around. Then I made some cuts to the film. We tested it again and got the same results. Then, I got a call from my lawyer telling me that they had taken the film away from me and they were firing my editor and bringing in another to re-cut it. Well, I've never had anything like this happen to me in my life. So I called them up and asked them why I hadn't been consulted. But it turns out they had the legal right to do that.

The guy they hired to do the editing was a president of the Editors Guild. He saw the film a couple of times and I told him that I really didn't think he should do this. I told him that I thought it was bad form and all he would get

out of it was a couple weeks' salary. He didn't say a word and the next thing I know they took it over and re-cut it. They cut ten minutes out of it and took it out and re-tested it. The results were worse. The numbers were actually lower. By this time, I had gone to the Directors Guild of America and started the process of getting my name taken off the film. As that was about to happen, they called and told me I could have the film back, but they gave me a list of things they wanted me to do. I told them they were either going to give the film back without conditions or not at all. At that point I didn't care what they did. I told them that if they were going to give it back to me, not to tell me what to do with it.

I finished the editing the way I wanted it and the film opened in New York and it got very good reviews. It did very, very good business. But, can you believe, they just stopped the advertising. But the good reviews started piling up and it looked like we had a small success on our hands. But they had only made about twenty screening prints and they wouldn't let anyone have the film. Then I heard directly from someone who worked over at Polygram that the head honcho said he wanted the picture buried. You see, by the time the picture came out, everyone knew the story about how they tried to take the picture from me then gave it back when their plan didn't work. So it became an embarrassment to them that they hadn't succeeded without me, and it really made them mad. Theater exhibitors from Massachusetts called, saying they had seventeen theaters and wanted to play *The Gingerbread Man*. But they couldn't, because the studio only gave them one print. Every time the print would go to any of these places it would play to a full capacity, then the studio would pull it. That's the only time anything like this happened to me. I am happy to report, all of those studio guys have since been fired.

For Embeth Davidtz, who played the girl in that, that should have been a step up in her career. Instead, because of the way the studio handled it, it was a detriment to her. It was also a detriment to Branagh, because most people don't get to see his performance. Robert Downey, Jr., was great in it, too. But it was a bad trap we all got caught up in.

Rehearsal and Directing

Rehearsal doesn't start until the filming starts. I read through the script with the actors and at that point we've all made notes and made whatever changes we want. We discuss attitudes. But mainly the rehearsal is in the process of setting up the scene we're going to shoot. I allow them to do

whatever they want to do. They always stay in the boundaries because they want the security of knowing what they're going to do. It's not easy to just wing it, you know. The script is always their mandate and their guide. And the actors hold on to it very tightly. But when they start making changes in words and phrases, or adding little things and this and that, it's just to increase the character. It's not nearly as traumatic or dramatic as it sounds. But by the time we go to make the first shot everybody knows exactly what they are doing.

I insist that they do what they became actors for in the first place, and that's to be creative. I want to see something that I've never seen before. I cannot always explain to them what that is. If a scene is played by five people, and it's exactly the way I envisioned it, and it's exactly the way it was written, and it's exactly the way everything is supposed to be, that's fine. But I'm never very excited about it. I want them to show me something I haven't seen before, and to do that I have to encourage them or make them feel safe that if they do go too far, that isn't going to appear in the film. I need to assure them that we'll do it again until it's right. I never will give them any instructions that limit them in their performances.

If actors ask me how to play a scene, I'll get them to talking about something else, like their wardrobe or something—anything to get them off it. Because if I tell them to play it a certain way, I've narrowed it to where they're going to stay within that boundary and they're not going to have all this room to work. I want them to have all the room there is. Some actors want to be more specific. They do pretty much what's in the script. Other actors will go too far and we'll see, as they do it, that it doesn't work. But if I can get thrilled by what I'm seeing, then I think that's got to be good, because all I am is a surrogate audience. I represent the audience.

> *He has a vision of what he wants but I think he remains open enough to let it all reveal itself to him.*
>
> *Glenn Close—Actress*

Cookie's Fortune (1999)

Glenn Close; Julianne Moore; Liv Tyler; Chris O'Donnell; Charles Dutton; Patricia Neal; Ned Beatty; Courtney B. Vance; Donald Moffat; Lyle Lovett.

Dr. T and the Women (2000)

Richard Gere; Helen Hunt; Farrah Fawcett; Laura Dern; Shelly Long; Tara Reid; Kate Hudson; Liv Tyler; Robert Hays; Matt Malloy; Andy Richter; Lee Grant.

Note: It is getting late in the interview and Altman has another appointment. His assistant is now tugging at our sleeves to get the interview completed. So his answers begin to get very short. This is the most we were able to get out of him for Cookie's Fortune *and* Dr. T. and the Women, *which was to be his next film.*

I developed *Cookie's Fortune* with Ann Rapp, who's also writing *Dr. T and the Women* for me. She's been under contract to me for three years now. *Cookie's Fortune* was just something that kind of grew out of stories Ann was telling me about her family in West Texas. I liked what she was telling me and so we decided to develop that into a film, and she just went to work and wrote it.

As I said, Ann also wrote *Dr. T.,* but because of casting delays we can't start shooting that for a few months yet.

In Closing

There's not a filmmaker alive or who has ever lived who has had a better shake than I have. I had never in my life or my career been without a project, and they've always been projects of my own choosing. I've made more films than anybody. I was always able to work. And I never had a lot of money to make a picture. I've never had excessive budget to work with. It's all been a bit of a struggle, but I find that's good. I think that everybody becomes more creative when the pressure's on and they have to do without certain things. Like I like to say, I've got a scene to look forward to, and that's the scene that I have never seen before.

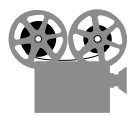
When it comes to giving advice to young filmmakers, I have a very specific piece of advice and that is, never take advice from anybody.

When I'm gone I'm not going to know if anybody remembered my work. I think some of the films will be remembered for a while, and that's good. But it's the association with the other artists that I deal with. I mean it really is like going down to the beach and we say hey, let's make a sand castle. You do the windows and I'll do the moat. And we work and work and then the tide starts coming in. And we finish this castle and we go sit up and have a beer

and smoke a joint or whatever, and then watch the tide come in. But in an hour nothing's there. And everybody starts walking home and we say well, what about next Saturday? Should we build another one? Somebody agrees, but one guy says he wants to do windows next time. Somebody else wants to do the towers. That's what it's really all about, isn't it? But eventually, it's all going to be an even beach.

He is unique. There is nobody like him.

Jeff Goldblum—Actor



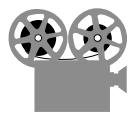
Robert Altman Filmography

Modern Football (1951)
King Basketball (1952)
The Last Mile (1953)
The Builders (1954)
Better Football (1954)
The Millionaire (TV series, 1955)
Alfred Hitchcock Presents (TV series, 1955)
The Perfect Crime (1955)
The Delinquents (1957)
Maverick (TV series, 1957)
The James Dean Story (1957)
Whirlybirds (TV series, 1957)
Peter Gunn (TV series, 1958)
Westinghouse Desilu Playhouse (TV series, 1958)
U.S. Marshal (TV series, 1958)
The Lawman (TV series, 1958)
Bonanza (TV series, 1959)
The Gale Storm Show (TV series, 1959)

Note: After this interview was completed, Altman went on to direct *Gosford Park*, which was released in 2002.

Hawaiian Eye (TV series, 1959)
United States Marshal (1959)
Troubleshooters (TV series, 1959)
Surfside 6 (TV series, 1960)
Route 66 (TV series, 1960)
Bus Stop (TV series, 1961)
The Gallant Men (TV series pilot episode, 1962)
Combat (TV series 1962)
Kraft Suspense Theater (TV series 1963)
Nightmare in Chicago (TV, 1964)
Pot au feu (1965)
The Katherine Reed Story (1965)
The Long Hot Summer (TV series, pilot episode, 1965)
Chicago, Chicago (TV, 1966)
Countdown (1968)
That Cold Day in the Park (1969)
*M*A*S*H* (1970)
Brewster McCloud (1970)
McCabe & Mrs. Miller (1971)
Images (1972)
The Long Goodbye (1973)
Thieves Like Us (1974)
California Split (1974)
Nashville (1975)
Buffalo Bill and the Indians (1976)
3 Women (1977)
A Wedding (1978)
Quintet (1979)
A Perfect Couple (1979)
H.E.A.L.T.H. (1979)
Popeye (1980)
Two by South (TV, 1982)
Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean (1982)
Streamers (1983)
Secret Honor (1984)
The Laundromat (TV, 1985)
O.C. and Stiggs (1985)
Fool for Love (1985)

The Dumb Waiter (1987)
Beyond Therapy (1987)
Basements (TV, 1987)
Aria (Segment of *Les Boreades,* 1987)
The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial (TV, 1988)
Tanner "88" (TV miniseries, 1988)
Vincent & Theo (1990)
The Player (1992)
McTeague (TV 1992)
Short Cuts (1993)
Black and Blue (1993)
Prêt-à-Porter (1993)
Kansas City (1996)
Jazz '34 (1996)
Gun (TV series, 1997)
The Gingerbread Man (1998)
Cookie's Fortune (1999)
Gosford Park (2001)
The Company (2003)



Awards and Nominations

Academy Awards, USA
Short Cuts, Best Director (nominated), 1994
The Player, Best Director (nominated), 1993
Nashville, Best Director (nominated), 1976
Nashville, Best Picture (nominated), 1976
*M*A*S*H*, Best Director (nominated), 1971

American Society of Cinematographers
Board of Governors Award, 1999

Berlin International Film Festival

Cookie's Fortune, Prize of the Guild of German Art House Cinemas, 1999
Cookie's Fortune, Golden Berlin Bear (nominated), 1999
Secret Honor, FIPRESCI Award, 1984
Buffalo Bill and the Indians, Golden Berlin Bear, 1976

Bodil Awards

Short Cuts, Best American Film, 1995
The Player, Best American Film, 1993
Nashville, Best American Film, 1977

Boston Society of Film Critics Awards

Short Cuts, Best Screenplay (shared with Frank Barhydt), 1993

British Academy Awards

The Player, Best Direction, 1993
The Player, Best Film (nominated, shared with David Brown, Michael Tolkin, and Nick Wechsler), 1993
A Wedding, Best Direction (nominated), 1979
A Wedding, Best Screenplay (nominated), 1979
*M*A*S*H*, Best Direction (nominated), 1971

Cannes Film Festival

Kansas City, Golden Palm (nominated), 1996
The Player, Best Director, 1992
The Player, Golden Palm (nominated), 1992
Aria, Golden Palm (nominated, shared with Bruce Beresford, Bill Bryden, Jean-Luc Godard, Derek Jarman, Franc Roddam, Nicolas Roeg, Ken Russell, Charles Sturridge, and Julien Temple), 1987
Fool for Love, Golden Palm (nominated), 1986
3 Women, Golden Palm (nominated), 1977
Images, Golden Palm (nominated), 1972
*M*A*S*H*, Golden Palm, 1970

Cartagena Film Festival

Nashville, Best Director, Golden India Catalina, 1976
Nashville, Best Film, Golden India Catalina (nominated), 1976

Cesar Awards

Short Cuts, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1995
The Player, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1993
Nashville, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1976

Directors Guild of America

Lifetime Achievement Award, 1994

Emmy Awards

Black and Blue, Outstanding Individual Achievement in Directing in a Variety or Music Program (nominated), 1993

Festroia-Troia International Film Festival

Fool for Love, Golden Dolphin, 1986

Film Society of Lincoln Center

Gala Tribute, 1994

Flanders International Film Festival

Joseph Plateau Life Achievement Award, 1993

Golden Globe Awards

Short Cuts, Best Screenplay—Motion Picture (nominated, shared with Frank Barhydt), 1994
The Player, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1993
Nashville, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1976
*M*A*S*H*, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1971

Independent Spirit Awards

Cookie's Fortune, Best Feature, (nominated, shared with Ernst Etchie Stroh), 2000
Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle (produced by Altman), Best Feature, 1995
Short Cuts, Best Director, 1994
Short Cuts, Best Screenplay (shared with Frank Barhydt), 1994

Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists
Shorts Cuts, Best Director—Foreign Film, Silver Ribbon, 1994
The Player, Best Director—Foreign Film, Silver Ribbon, 1993

London Film Critics Circle Awards
The Player, Director of the Year, ALFS Award, 1993

National Board of Review Awards
Nashville, Best Director (tied with Stanley Kubrick for *Barry Lyndon*), 1975

National Society of Film Critics Awards
Nashville, Best Director, 1976

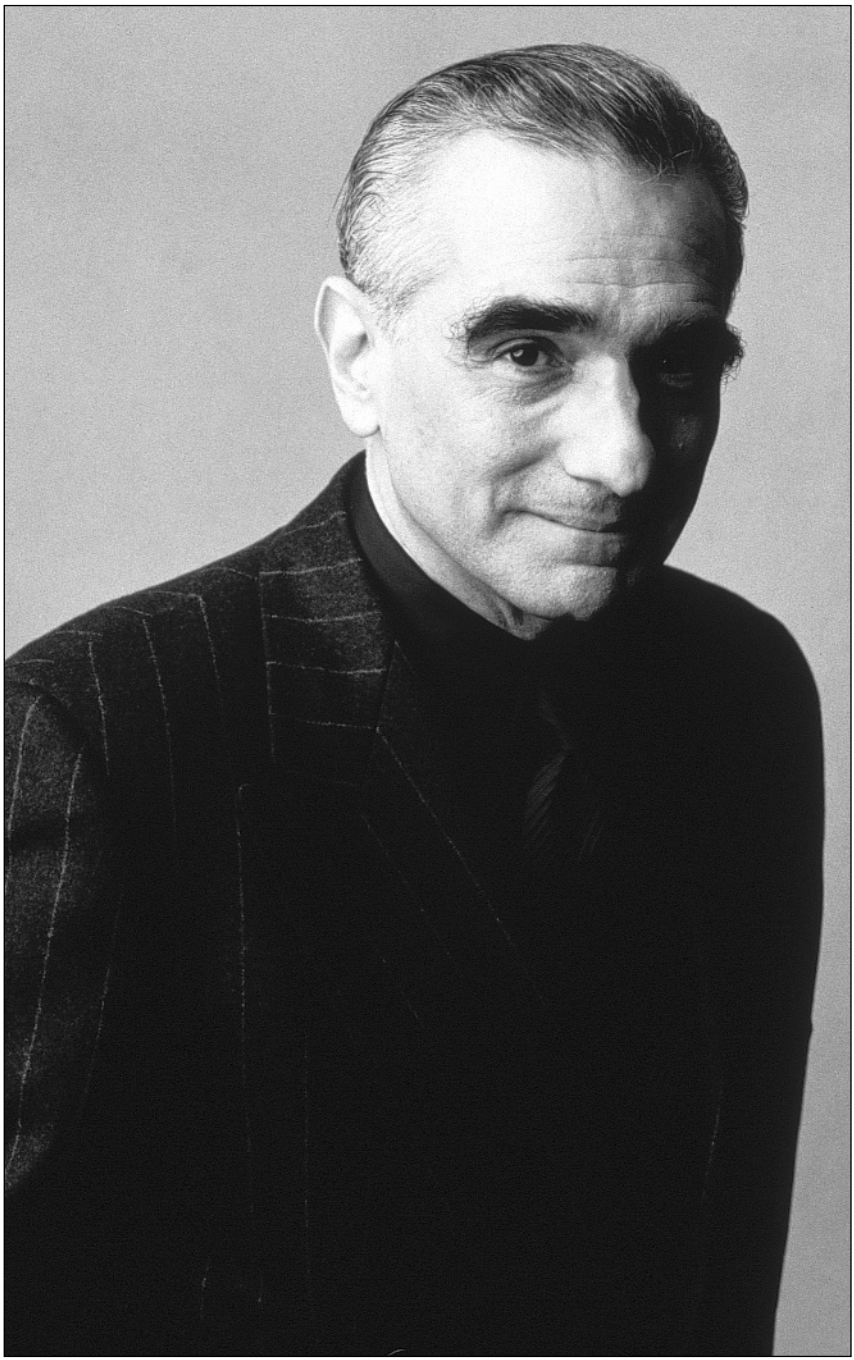
New York Film Critics Circle Awards
The Player, Best Director, 1992
Nashville, Best Director, 1975

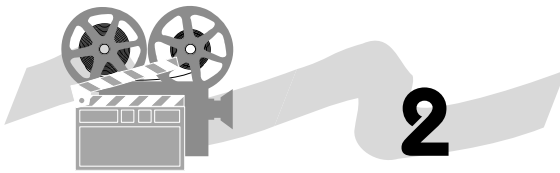
São Paulo International Film Festival
Jazz '34, Best Documentary, Audience Award, 1997

Southeastern Film Critics Association
The Player, Best Director, 1993

Venice Film Festival
Dr. T and the Women, Golden Lion (nominated), 2000
Career Golden Lion Award, 1996
Short Cuts, Golden Lion (tied with *Trois Couleurs: Bleu*), 1993

Writers Guild of America
A Wedding, Best Comedy Written Directly for the Screen (nominated, shared with John Considine, Patricia Resnick, and Allan F. Nicholls), 1979
Images, Best Drama Written Directly for the Screen (nominated), 1973
McCabe & Mrs. Miller, Best Drama Adapted from Another Medium (nominated, shared with Brian McKay), 1972





2

The Films of Martin Scorsese

Director Martin Scorsese was born on November 17, 1942, in New York City and grew up in the tough downtown neighborhood of Little Italy, which later provided the inspiration for several of his films. As a child he suffered from severe asthma. Since he was not allowed to play outside or participate in sports because of his illness, his parents often took him to the movies, where he became fascinated with the images on screen. He later graduated from Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx and had serious aspirations of entering the priesthood.

Scorsese received a bachelor of science degree in 1964, and a master of science degree in 1968, both from New York University. It was during this period that he made several award-winning student films, including *It's Not Just You, Murray!* and *The Big Shave*. He then wrote the script for what would become his first feature film, *Who's That Knocking at My Door?*, released theatrically in 1969, followed by *Street Scenes* in 1970. He also served on the faculty of New York University from 1968 through the end of 1970, during which time he taught film production.

In the early 1970s Scorsese moved to Hollywood, where he met producer Roger Corman, who asked him to direct *Boxcar Bertha*, starring David Carradine and Barbara Hershey. The film was released in 1972 and proved to be a major step in what would become a distinguished film career.

> *I absolutely believe Martin Scorsese is our proudest moment. He is the greatest living American director.*
>
> *Jodie Foster—Actress*

The Conversation

Note: If the order of the films appears to be out of chronological sequence, it is because Mr. Scorsese likes to talk out of order. His energy seems to be so high and his mind so quick that he sometimes jumps from one subject to the next without regard to the order of things—which makes him that much more interesting to interview.

There's no way to really tell how I made the transition from wanting to be a priest in the Catholic Church to becoming a filmmaker. I was at the age of eight or nine years old when I began to take Catholicism, or the Catholic religion, seriously. I found a kind of refuge in the church from where I was living. It's a very gradual thing that occurred over a period of twenty years. I do know that I did try to become part of a preparatory seminary, it's called, in New York. But my grades weren't good enough; I failed out. Went to a Catholic High School, Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx, and during that period I actually had no idea what I was going to do. I became interested in reading, although I had come from a working-class family that had no books in the house and there was no reading done. It just wasn't done.

My father read the tabloids, the *Daily News* and the *Daily Mirror*, never the *Post* and certainly not the *New York Times*. We had no magazines or anything of that kind, and so my learning of language was not through literature; rather, it was visual. It was through movies and films on television, the early days of television, around 1948. I saw Italian films on television for the Italian-American community and I thought they were astounding films. They were *Paisan* and *Open City* [*Roma, città aperta*] and *The Bicycle Thief* [*Ladri di biciclette*] and *Shoeshine* [*Sciuscià*]. Pictures by Vittorio De Sica and Roberto Rossellini. I was five or six years old when I saw those.

At the same time I was watching every film made in Hollywood because I had terrible asthma from the age of three on, and the only place they could take me to was the movie theater. I couldn't do any sports. My parents were not educated people, so there was a great fear about the asthma at the time. So basically, I spent all my free time in a movie theater.

I became enamored of the church. I spent a lot of time at a Catholic church down in the Lower East Side, St. Patrick's, a little cathedral that was built, I think, in 1802 or 1812. It was the first Catholic cathedral in New York, and it had a great history to it, and my school was there, too—St. Patrick's Elementary School. We'd go back and forth to church and to the school, back and forth. I eventually became an altar boy. I became attached to a number of the priests, the young priests in their early twenties who were assigned to the community by the archdiocese. Younger priests who related to the younger people, rather than the older Italian priests. Or, I should say, Italian-American priests. Some of them were actually from Italy, who dealt with the older part of the community. The younger priests introduced me to classical music. Introduced me to different things, so I had a very good relationship with them, and I wanted to be like them.

It was a rough area to grow up in. It was not only a tough street, but it was right off the edge of the Bowery and there were a lot of what we now call "homeless" people. There were a lot of the men and women who were drunk and it was a pretty savage vision of the end of life, so to speak. Right there, out your window and your front door. So I went to the church and then to the movie theater. Now I'm here.

By the time I finished up Cardinal Hayes High School, the only school I could get into was New York University. I tried to get into Fordham and other schools like that, but my high school average wasn't high enough. NYU was really interesting to me because, besides the Liberal Arts College, Washington Square College, it also had a program in motion pictures, television, and radio. This is very important, because today people think of film school as a place where you do nothing but film. This is not the case. Back in 1960 at New York University, the first two years were mostly liberal arts, and the film courses were very, very few. There was one in each semester in the first year; both were basically the history of film. Then in the sophomore year there were maybe two classes, starting with an introductory course dealing with the essentials of what a camera does and what a lens does and what film does. The third year you were able to make a three- or four-minute film, and then by the fourth year make a ten-minute film. By the fourth year you were spending a lot of time making films. So, by the time I started making my first short film in the summer of '63, I had put the passion that I had felt for religion into that.

Even after I finished New York University in 1964, I was still thinking of going right back into a major seminary. A number of friends of mine who

did not follow through with the preparatory seminar school that I was in, who left the school with me for various reasons, went back and became priests. So, I was still pretty much interested in doing that—until I made my second short film. That film got some recognition. It was a very exciting time in America and around the world for cinema because you had the new wave cinema coming in from Italy and France, and Hollywood had begun to decline. The wonderful golden age of Hollywood was almost over. It was pretty much over, I should say. So that there was new blood being infused into a new generation and you didn't have to live in Hollywood to make a feature film. You didn't have to go through the studios to make a feature film. You could make a feature film like *Shadows in the Streets of New York,* the way John Cassavetes did. Or the way Shirley Clark did in *Connection* or the *Cruel World*. When I saw films like *Shadows* or *Faces* by Cassavetes I knew that was my true calling. Bang, that's the kind of picture I had to make. I was also watching all the films of John Ford and Hitchcock and, of course, Orson Welles. You begin to understand where a camera should be placed and what a lens can do. Throughout my whole life I've been combining those styles.

What's a Nice Girl like You Doing in a Place Like This?

(student film)

It's Not Just You, Murray!

(student films)

What's a Nice Girl like You was just a short film I did exploring the style of what was really popular at the time. It was a combination of a takeoff on the style of French and Italian New Wave and maybe the routines by Mel Brooks, Ernie Kovaks on television. I was really trying to explore a style, and I think now it was very juvenile. I don't like people to see them because they're juvenile films, in a way.

You know, for me to be making movies, to be sitting and talking to you now, to be able to make movies from where I come from a few blocks from

here is like going to the moon. Where I came from was very, very cut off from the rest of America. Very cut off. To give you an idea, I never traveled to the West Side of New York. The first time I went there was to sign up for NYU. And to do that I just walked eight or ten blocks east to west. But we really never did leave the neighborhood that much. Oh, I left the neighborhood to go to my high school, but that was on the subway. You took the subway and you never saw what was in between. So the short films that I made at NYU have more to do with a kind of childishness and juvenile excitement about making films.

It's Just Not You Murray was sort of an homage to Mel Brooks. In that film I incorporated elements that I would later use in *Mean Streets* and *Goodfellas*. I began to take stories and people that I knew growing up and tried to blend those with a combination of 1930s Warner Bros. gangster films like *The Roaring Twenties* by Raoul Walsh or stuff I saw that Fellini made.

What's a Nice Girl Like You and *It's Not Just You, Murray!* both received awards. *Murray* got an award from the Screen Producers Guild in Hollywood. That's interesting, because in the old Hollywood system, the producer was the man who really made the movie. So I was brought out to Hollywood in 1965 to the Screen Producers Guild dinner and they gave me the Jesse Laske Award for Best Student Film for *It's Not Just You, Murray!* It was an extraordinary night because on the dais was David O. Selznick, Sam Goldwyn, Gary Grant, Jimmy Stewart, Maureen O'Hara, and Jean Seberg—it went on and on and on. I actually shook hands with Alfred Hitchcock. It was amazing, but it took me another eight years before I got *Mean Streets* made.

Do What You Know

At NYU they used to tell us to make films about what we knew. We had one teacher that was very forceful about that, and he also insisted that if a student said he wanted to direct, that he have a script in hand. If you didn't have one, he'd tell you to go write one, that if you want to direct, the script would have to come from you, you know. So, the filmmaker pretty much did all the scripting, as well as the editing. In some cases you even did your own photography.

In fact I had a lot of experience editing at New York University and I think it's where I began to think that I had more of a feel for writing and editing than photography. To this day, I'm still baffled by the light. I don't know where the light comes from, because I grew up in a tenement. It took me

years to learn this. I never saw any real light. You wanted light, you turned on a light bulb. Maybe that's why I can't get a shot like Steven Spielberg got in *Empire of the Sun*, with the Japanese kamikaze pilots silhouetted against the red ball of the sun rising in the morning. I never saw such a thing growing up. I saw men and women in cars, nightclubs, a lot of bars, churches, and the inside of tenement houses, and always lots of hallways. You'll see lots of hallways in my pictures. Even in *Last Temptation of Christ*, there's a scene with Jesus and Judas in a hallway; we found a hallway in Morocco.

I started out as an editor to try to make some money. I just wanted to do work that was associated with film. So I started working as an editor; one of the projects I worked on was Michael Wadleigh's *Woodstock*. Wadleigh had also been a film student at NYU and we knew each other and he photographed my film *Who's That Knocking at My Door*, with Harvey Keitel and Zina Bethune. That's the one that came to the attention of Roger Corman.

I just worked on *Woodstock* in New York and then the film was taken to California to be finished. I think when I left, the cut was eight or nine hours. There were a lot of editors on the film, and I was one of the key ones in New York, but they took it to L.A. They only took certain people with them, and it was finally cut down to three hours. Fred Weintraub of Warner Bros. had another rock-and-roll film that he wanted cut, and since he knew me from *Woodstock*, he flew me out to California. Around the same time, *Who's That Knocking* had opened in New York. It was wonderfully ignored, maybe rightfully so, but there're some good things in it. I mean, the actors are wonderful and the camera work is pretty good. There was only one real champion of the film and his name was Roger Ebert, but it also got a very nice review from Kevin Thomas. The film opened in L.A. under a different title, because the theater manager didn't like the original title. So I said fine, as long as they show it, I don't care.

Roger Corman saw that film and we had a meeting with him. He asked me if I wanted to do the sequel to *Bloody Mama*. It was a costume drama set in the Thirties, so I said okay. He said he was going to get married and we would talk when he got back. By that time I had tried everything, working on many films in New York. I even had tried to direct one film called *The Honeymoon Killers*. I was hired as the director, and then after one week I was taken off the picture. I was fired from so many jobs because I had my own way of doing things. But I really didn't know enough to really direct a whole feature at that point. Especially a film with a plot like *Honeymoon Killers,*

which was finally directed by the writer Leonard Castle. Anyway, after talking with Corman, I went back to edit a film at Warner Bros. for Weintraub. At that time George Lucas was there finishing *THX,* and Brian De Palma was out in California, too. He took me everywhere to meet people. I figured, well, I'd never hear from Roger Corman again.

About that same time, I had become friendly with John Cassavetes through another gentleman by the name of Jay Cocks, who worked for me over the years and still works with me. We showed Cassavetes *Who's That Knocking* and Cassavetes was very, very supportive and told me to keep making pictures like that. I went to work for John for a few weeks as a sound effects editor on his film *Minnie and Moskowitz*. Basically, I was drawing a salary, but I wasn't really doing anything. He just wanted me. He was just so very sweet. He gave me a salary and a place to work and every now and then I'd record something for him and he'd put it in the film. I had no idea what was happening.

Boxcar Bertha (1972)

Barbara Hershey; David Carradine; Barry Primus; Bernie Casey; John Carradine; Victor Argo.

One day John's assistant got a call from one of the agents I had at William Morris saying that they had a feature film for me to do. She thought it was a joke and hung up on them. Finally the agent got in touch with me and said that Roger Corman was back and he wanted me to do a film called *Boxcar Bertha.* It turned out to be a major film for me because along with the film came actors Barbara Hershey and David Carradine. I really did my homework on that film and prepared everything on paper. As I said, I had been fired from so many projects that to actually get through the twenty-four days of shooting in Arkansas was a big event for me. I had it all laid out on paper, and Roger Corman saw that and he was very supportive.

I was doing a shot of Barbara Hershey running and jumping onto the boxcar, and a mist had come up from the ground. I thought this was magical to me, because I'm a city guy, and I had no idea of what a real mist was. If we see mists in New York we think it's a fire. In New York there's no such thing as the morning mists and dew on the grass. We don't see any of that. That doesn't happen in Manhattan. Barbara started running for the train and we started shooting and it had a beautiful, good feeling about it.

I do recall the first four days were the hardest four days, because when you worked for Corman, you learned how to make a picture on time and on budget. He told me that the hardest stuff was going to be shooting the train scenes. Anything with the train is going to be hard because you have to think about it. The train pulls up, the action occurs, and you cut. Now you need another take. Well, then you've got to wait for the train to back up. It's a big machine and it takes time. So Roger told me to do all the train stuff in four days and get the worst over with right away, because you have the energy right at that point—and he was right. I learned a great deal on that picture and I was so glad to just have gotten through the twenty-four days without getting thrown off the film.

Mean Streets (1973)

Robert De Niro; Harvey Keitel; David Proval; Amy Robinson; Richard Romanus; Cesare Danova; Victor Argo; David Carradine; Robert Carradine; George Memmoli; Lenny Scaletta; Jeannie Bell; Murray Moston.

Taxi Driver (1976)

Robert De Niro; Jodie Foster; Peter Boyle; Albert Brooks; Victor Argo; Harvey Keitel; Cybill Shepherd; Joe Spinell.

After I finished *Boxcar*, Brian De Palma showed me a script called *Taxi Driver* that was owned by Julia and Michael Phillips and Paul Schrader. Brian introduced me to Paul Schrader, who had just sold a script called *The Yakuza* to Warner Bros. for a record price, and they weren't about to let me do *Taxi Driver* based on *Boxcar Bertha.* At about the same time, I started to work on *Mean Streets.* John Cassavetes was the one who pushed me into making *Mean Streets.* He had seen *Boxcar Bertha* and he took me in his office and embraced me and told me that I had done a nice job but did I want to spend my life making something that was ultimately not good. He asked me what else I wanted to make, and I told him about *Mean Streets*, which was called *Season of the Witch* at the time. He told me to work on the script and get it done. Eventually Jonathan Taplan pulled the money together, and we shot it in the

fall of 1972, mainly in Los Angeles. When the rough cut of *Mean Streets* was shown to Michael and Julia Phillips and Paul Schrader, then it became clear that we could get *Taxi Driver* made.

Around 1970 my friend Jay Cocks and his wife Verna invited me to Christmas dinner. They had also invited Bob De Niro, whom they had met through Brian De Palma. After dinner we sat down in the living room and Bob said he knew me. He named some guys I used to hang around with in the old neighborhood. I asked him how he knew them and he said he used to run around with so-and-so, and I remember them. The time he was referring to was when we were both around sixteen years old. In that area there were different groups of guys. We were in a group that felt more at home between Houston Street and Spring Street, with Prince in the middle. De Niro was hanging out with a group more towards Broome and Grand and Hester. Small world.

They were very different kinds of groups where I grew up. There was the hardworking class of decent Italian-Americans trying to make a living and trying to put food on the table for their families. At the same time there was the criminal element. There's no doubt about it and that was all part of the fabric of where we grew up. Anyway, De Niro said he heard I had made a film with Harvey Keitel about the neighborhood, about the young men and women in that area. I think Bob was just about to shoot *Bang the Drum Slowly* down in Florida at that time.

I remember I was editing a Roger Corman film called *Unholy Rollers* with Claudia Jennings. It was made to beat out *Kansas City Bomber* with Raquel Welch before that one went into the theaters. American International Pictures and Roger would get their films in there first—same subject matter without the big budget. Anyway, we got the money to make *Mean Streets*, and I remember talking to Bob on the phone in his motel in Florida about playing Johnny Boy in the picture, and by mid-November we started shooting in Los Angeles.

The key with Jodie Foster was just the way she walked in the room when she came to have a meeting with us. She had total command, and she was more professional than I was at the time—maybe even more so today. She really is a pro. She had been acting since she was three or four years old, so she knew what to do. When De Niro and I met with her we were a little tongue-tied because the subject matter was difficult. It was very touchy, and her mother was there, and it was all very, very clearly set out what the boundary

lines would be. I mean, I think you can tell from the rest of my films, too, that I don't deal with that sort of material normally. She and De Niro played off each other a lot. But as I said, she's a pro, and it wasn't a matter of loosening her up for the camera. She actually helped us.

John Calley was the executive at Warner Bros. who bought *Mean Streets*. First we screened it at Paramount, but they didn't want it. So, we took it that afternoon to Warner Bros. The head of distribution—Leo Greenfield, I think his name was—started remembering his days growing up back in New York. And they thought Keitel looked like John Garfield, so that was in our favor. Then they said Ted Ashley has to see this. He was the head of the company. He liked it so they bought it.

Taxi Driver Gets Made

Taxi Driver was very much Paul Schrader's script. He wrote it over a period, I don't know, I keep thinking maybe four, five weeks, three weeks maybe. He was in a very lonely state at the time, a very bad state of frame of mind as you can tell from the film. The loneliness, frustration, anxiety, fear. It's all there. And, somehow, I connected with the material. Travis was an outsider. I thought of myself as an outsider. Maybe because I was a kid with asthma or whatever, I don't know. I've always felt like that. The anger and the rage are always there. Maybe it's because of the way I grew up. I don't know but it's there. It was there with Schrader. It was there in Travis. And, in a way, I felt it was like an umbilical cord to me. I felt as if I just knew it intrinsically. And De Niro felt a similar way, although we never articulated it with Bob. He doesn't have to talk about it. He does it, you see. And so it was a really perfect union of the three of us.

I didn't think the film would ever get anywhere. We were doing it as a labor of love. It was the hardest film I had to do with a studio, because the studio was very upset with what they were seeing in the dailies and they were upset because we were going a little over schedule because of all the rainfall in the summer. That summer we were shooting in New York there was tons of rain and at a certain point you just started shooting in the rain. We just couldn't help it. The car was moving all the time, which is a problem. In any event, the studio was all over us on that picture. But Michael and Julia Phillips were the ones who finally saved the day when the cut of the film was threatened by the studio. Somehow they worked it out.

I don't like a lot of violence in films, but it's the way I grew up. I saw that sort of thing all the time. I knew that there was a double edge to violence,

especially when you're younger. There's an excitement to it. But it's really ugly and it's bad and it's wrong. I just saw it that way. Growing up I saw how undignified it was, but part of it was just a bunch of kids in the street being tough sometimes. That's everywhere. That's not just the Lower East Side. I saw things when I was eight or nine years old, you know, and it leaves an impression on you. And so I usually approach violence in as honest a way as possible and there's no doubt about it. I'm not saying that a ten-year-old kid should see these films, you know. They shouldn't. There should be some regulation. But I always stayed as true as I could to what I knew.

Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore (1974)

Ellen Burstyn; Kris Kristofferson; Mia Bendixsen; Alfred Lutter III; Lelia Goldoni; Ola Moore; Harvey Keitel; Lane Bradbury; Diane Ladd; Vic Tayback; Valerie Curtin; Jodie Foster.

I had met Francis Coppola in Italy in 1970 at a film festival and we became friends. Later, I had taken the answer print of *Mean Streets* up to San Francisco to show it to him. He cast De Niro for *Godfather II* from that. He also had dinner with Ellen Burstyn, and at that time she was very hot, having just come off *The Exorcist.* She was nominated for an Academy Award for that role and she should have won but didn't. Anyway, she had control over this project called *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore,* and she asked Coppola about new directors and he mentioned me. John Calley at Warner Bros. asked me to take a look at the script. I read it. I thought it was a really good screenplay, written by Robert Getchell.

I had another meeting with Calley and he said this is the kind of thing I should do, because even though *Mean Streets* was good and got some good reviews, people were saying I could only direct men. So I said okay, I said, let's try to make a studio film for a good budget with mainly women in the cast. We improvised a great deal but we had some good fun because the basic script by Getchell was excellent. Kris Kristofferson was amazing. We met him and he said he had really liked *Mean Streets*. He felt that he had a kinship to the picture because he'd had a similar relationship with a friend of his. We had a great time shooting that film and I had the same cameraman as I had on *Mean Streets* (Kent Wakeford). It was very, very quick and intense shooting for about eight or nine weeks in Tucson, Arizona.

New York, New York (1977)

Liza Minnelli; Robert De Niro; Lionel Stander; Barry Primus; Mary Kay Place; Georgie Auld; George Memmoli; Dick Miller; Murray Moston; Lenny Gaines; Clarence Clemons

Again, there was that conflict between thinking I wanted to be a Hollywood director in the old tradition and the director who was more influenced by European films, so I tried to blend the two. I tried to do a film that had the look of Hollywood musicals, the late Forties or early Fifties, before Cinemascope. Films made by Vincent Minnelli and Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly. That sort of thing. I even used a 32mm lens all the time, because those films were made without the knowledge that there would be television. You didn't have to do many close-ups. We even tried to shoot in 1:33 [aspect] ratio. But after the first week my cinematographer, Laszlo Kovacs, and myself decided to make a compromise and go to 1:66 aspect ratio. If you see the film on laser disc that is the exact aspect ratio, it's 1:66, not 1:85. I was so naïve and I didn't want the old Hollywood ever to fade away. In my mind I thought it still existed. But it didn't anymore. Everything was in decay and in change, which I suppose is natural.

The old Technicolor dye-transfer print system was no longer being used in America. The last film to be printed that way was *Godfather II* and then the machines were sold to the Chinese and we went to a new system. To this day that system doesn't hold up as well. However, years later I got very upset about that and spearheaded a movement to try to have some sort of stable color stock so that if somebody sees a print of a film made twenty-five years earlier, the color is still reasonably there. What was happening with the color of the films in the Seventies and late Sixties, if they weren't dye-transfer printed, they were in bad condition. The color on the print could fade in six years as well as the color on the original negative. So here you are in a situation where suddenly all the films are being made in color and you could design in color, right? Designing in color means that the color is supposed to mean something. It has a dramatic purpose. It has an emotional and psychological meaning. But then the color doesn't last. It's crazy. And, so I got very upset about that. In *New York, New York* we painted the picture in a certain way. What we tried to do there was get the look of

old Hollywood, but in the foreground have a film that was loose and free and open and about relationships between creative people. More like a Cassavetes film, let's say.

If you ask me, now I think the film went too long and we rewrote the script too many times. But in any event it was an attempt to combine the two styles. In the end I realized it probably couldn't be done.

His Take on Film Reviews

I always remember all the bad ones. You say to yourself, they don't know what they're talking about. After *New York, New York* I felt as if the bottom had just been kicked out of me. Looking back I think what happened was that I didn't know if I could ever make another film that meant something personally to me. That made me feel like maybe I couldn't go out there and fight for a film like I did for *Mean Streets* or *Taxi Driver* or even *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. After *New York, New York* I didn't know if I had it in me anymore. And, if I didn't have it in me, could I then become a regular director? A pro who goes in, not self-conscious, and who isn't full of pride? But goes in humble enough to make a decent picture. I didn't know what was going to happen, because I had spent a lot of time working on that film and it was badly received.

Raging Bull (1980)

Robert De Niro; Cathy Moriarty; Joe Pesci; Frank Vincent; Nicholas Colasanto; Theresa Saldana; Mario Gallo; Frank Adonis; Joseph Bono; Frank Topham; Lori Anne Flax.

De Niro kept plugging away at me about *Raging Bull*. He gave me the book when I was doing *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* in 1974. But I had never seen a prizefight. The prizefights I did see were on television or in the movie theater where it was all one angle and one guy had white trunks, the other guy had black trunks. I had no idea what was happening. I didn't understand anything about sports because, as I said, as a kid I had asthma and didn't play sports. So, I was against it and I didn't want to be involved with it. I had reached low ebb in my life around September 1978, when De Niro came to speak to me again about making *Raging Bull*. It was then that I realized I could make the film. I just had to put myself back into cinema some-

how and work on this movie. Paul Schrader had written a version of the script for us, about six or seven months earlier, and it was getting more manageable for me to see the way Schrader had structured it.

Having gone through two-and-a-half years of my own questioning and searching and taking myself too seriously and trying to find out who I really was, I suddenly felt more comfortable with the idea of Jake La Motta, I guess. I couldn't verbalize it then but I knew that I would be comfortable with him because I understood then what the film should be. Bob and I didn't verbalize it that much, but I remember Bob and I, we went off and we did some writing on it together and once that was done the picture was ready to go.

I don't know anything about boxing, so Brian De Palma and Jay Cocks took me to see my first fight at Madison Square Garden. I was all the way up in the bleachers and they patiently explained to me what was happening in the ring. Unfortunately, it all looked the same to me. Brian De Palma leaned over and he said good luck trying to come up with an image on this stuff. But I did notice one thing. I noticed that they had a pail and a sponge and they put the sponge on the fighter during breaks. The sponge was filled with blood and it was streaking down the fighter's chest and his back. I said to myself, this is savage.

A few weeks later Jake La Motta took De Niro and myself to Madison Square Garden again and we sat in the third row. At that time I could see more going on. But it still didn't mean much to me. What was important was what I learned from doing *The Last Waltz*. I understood that it was important to stay on the stage and not go to the audience, because the audience had been done, you see. *Woodstock* did the audience. In *Woodstock* the audience becomes important as a performer. But in *Raging Bull* I took the cue from *Last Waltz*. I'd have to stay on the stage.

In *The Last Waltz,* song after song, guest star after guest star, I saw the way they were working. The end of each song was like the end of a round in a prizefight. They all have to work together and they all have to end at the same time. They have to get their cues off each other. It was hard work. What I was interested in in *The Last Waltz* was the relationship with each of them on the stage. I took that idea and applied it to the relationship of two fighters in the ring. You hardly ever see the crowd, and stay inside the ropes. Don't go outside the ropes. I mean once or twice in the Fox fight, we went outside the ropes because he threw the fight. There was no energy there.

In *Raging Bull's* big fight we were outside the ropes at the beginning where Jake's taking a beating. But then when he turns and starts hitting back in the thirteenth or the eleventh round, I forget which it was now, we come flying through the ropes on a crane and then we stay inside and the fight's over in a few seconds. And that's what gave me the cue.

La Motta and De Niro worked out the choreography of each fight that was going to be in the film. I had this little black-and-white video that they made at Gleason's gym, and I just ran it back and forth and then did drawings and diagrams as to how to do a series of punches. I designed all the fight scenes that way on paper because it's got to be what fighting would seem like to a man inside the ring. What it must look like in his mind and what he must hear, you know. It took ten weeks to shoot and we used about ten minutes in the final picture.

There are two reasons for shooting the film in black-and-white. Number one, the color-fading problem. Why design the picture in color, when it's going to fade and we have no guarantee of the color remaining more than ten years, maybe less? At that time, in order to get the stock that would fade more slowly, the studios had to pay a penny a foot more, and the studio couldn't afford it—the poor things. They were making the billions on their films, you think they would spend the extra penny so they would last.

The other reason is that Michael Powell and I were looking at 8mm footage of De Niro sparring, and they had red gloves on and Michael Powell noticed that the gloves were wrong. Even though we would have had oxblood gloves in *Raging Bull* to be correct for the period, something was wrong with the color. I think a lot of it had to do with the way I grew up looking at television and black-and-white movies and how that set you in a certain time frame. So that if you don't know that the fluid coming off these fighters was blood, sweat, or water, you don't know what it was. So we made it look like a period piece and shot it in black-and-white.

The King of Comedy (1983)

Robert De Niro; Jerry Lewis; Diahnne Abbott; Sandra Bernhard; Ed Herlihy; Lou Brown.

That was also a De Niro project. He felt we could do a picture rather quickly in New York about celebrities. Well, not so much about celebrity, but about

the people who want a piece of the celebrity. I think it really was an examination of what it's like to be a celebrity and what it's like to be a person on the outside looking in. That's why the opening credits have Sandra Bernhard's hand on the car window trying to reach Jerry. The whole idea of what a celebrity is in American culture. And a comedy of manners, too. A comedy of faux pas and comedy of inappropriate behavior—excruciatingly inappropriate. Like showing up at Jerry Lewis's house unannounced. That was a grim scene. It took me a little longer than usual to shoot that picture because I had been sick with pneumonia or something. After I finished that movie I realized that I wanted to get back to my own work, which was *Last Temptation of Christ*. I wanted to get that made and I didn't want to do ideas from other people. I wanted to move on with my own. You see, at that point I didn't know if I would have anything of interest that would get me on the set at that hour of the morning.

The Color of Money (1986)

Paul Newman; Tom Cruise; Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio; Helen Shaver; John Turturro; Bill Cobbs.

The Color of Money was a picture that I wanted to make. Here again I took someone else's material and made a picture with a star like Paul Newman. Right before that I had tried to make *Last Temptation of Christ* and I thought I was back on track. That was 1983, but then at the end of the year for a number of reasons the plug was pulled on the picture, and I had no picture to make, and again I had to rethink my work. First I was doing an independent film called *After Hours* in New York just to see if I could shoot a film again in forty days. In the case of *After Hours* it was forty nights. Then my agent put me together with Richard Price and we started writing a script around Paul Newman and around the character of Fast Eddie Felson. About that time a cameraman by the name of Michael Chapman directed a film called *All the Right Moves* with Tom Cruise, and I thought the kid was great. So I called him up and offered him the part of Vincent Lauria. We got Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio to play his girlfriend, Carmen. We shot it quickly in Chicago in January of 1986. By the time we were editing that film, Tom's film *Top Gun* had come out. By the time *Color of Money* came out in November of 1986 we had Newman and Cruise and it was really great. It played off very,

very well, I thought. The three of them were wonderful in that picture, and to this day it's a favorite of mine.

I felt oddly confident, and obviously I had all the confidence in him, because I was a great admirer of his work.

Willem Dafoe—Actor

The Last Temptation of Christ (1988)

Willem Dafoe; Harvey Keitel; Paul Greco; Steve Shill; Verna Bloom; Barbara Hershey; Victor Argo; Michael Been; Andre Gregory; John Lurie.

After that I started working on the script for *Goodfellas* with Nick Pileggi. But at the same time I was always trying to get *Last Temptation* made. Finally in January of 1987 I signed on with Mike Ovitz and Creative Artists Agency and within two or three weeks he got a meeting with Tom Pollack at Universal and Garth Trabinski at the Cineplex Odeon Group, who would actually play *Last Temptation of Christ* in his theaters. That's the main reason we didn't get it made in 1983. The United Artists theater chain wouldn't play it back then. If you make a picture for millions of dollars, you do need a place to show it. So, it's understandable. They asked how little I could make the picture for. We said we could make it for seven million. So, in September of that year we actually started shooting the picture in Morocco with Willem Dafoe as Jesus. I had seen him in *Platoon* and thought he was great.

I just regret not having more time to edit the picture. The film was released a little earlier than we thought it was going to be released because of all these wild rumors going around. I would never go back and touch the picture, because I believe that any film you make is the best you could do under the circumstances, given the studio, the release date, the shooting on the set, the amount of money you had. I don't believe in going back and saying, well, now, here's the director's version—unless you're unlucky enough to have a film taken completely away from you and reedited by the studio. Thank God, so far, that hasn't happened to me.

He's very compassionate. He sees people and he respects them for who they are. He doesn't pass judgment on them. He sees them.

Joe Pesci—Actor

Goodfellas (1990)

Robert De Niro; Ray Liotta; Joe Pesci; Lorraine Bracco; Paul Sorvino; Frank Sivero; Tony Darrow; Frank Vincent; Mike Starr; Chuck Low; Frank DiLeo.

The book had a lot of incidents and a lot of different things occur in it. You can make two or three other films from that book. I just took this one story of the Lufthansa robbery, what it meant to be a soldier in a mob like that—being privy to different levels of that society and the fascinating attraction of that world. It was something I grew up with and I understood. As you become older, you begin to understand that it's negative. There's still an attraction, but what does that say about us as human beings or, for that matter, maybe me as a human being? A lot of people like to see this kind of stuff, but why? It was an exploration of how I saw and understood power when I was growing up. I think the real approach to the picture was almost oral history. Before there was writing, a man would tell a story and he was the village storyteller. Henry Hill's dialogue is quoted throughout the book. He's literally telling you a story on a street corner, and I would listen to a lot of street-corner stories when I was growing up.

Remember Jimmy Cagney giving his thank-you speech when he accepted his American Film Institute Award? He thanked a number of characters that he grew up with in the street. He said that was where he learned to act. Well, that was the way I heard people telling stories in the street, and that's what you have in the book, and we let that guide us. We let that voice guide us. In fact, that's why we used so much voiceover.

Joe Pesci understands how far we've come from the Bronx. He had lived in similar circumstances and knew it firsthand. He had more experience in show business than I did. He was actually a child actor and worked in nightclubs as a singer, and I didn't have that kind of experience at all. He understood that world very, very, very well. They had worked so well together in *Raging Bull* that I just couldn't see any other way of making the film. And I loved Ray Liotta in *Something Wild* and a couple of other pictures I'd seen him in. I promised him the part and gave it to him. Then the whole thing sort of came alive. We did some rehearsals for a couple of weeks, and we improvised some of the dialogue and it all came alive. They all felt comfortable in that world, so we didn't have to tell them how to sit, how to walk in a room or how to address someone, you know.

The improvisation that Joe Pesci did with Ray Liotta was based on a real incident that happened to Joe. They're all laughing in a nightclub and suddenly Joe says why are you laughing at me? He starts to play with Ray. We worked it out in the rehearsal, rewrote it, and did it in a nightclub on 49th Street and Broadway, and that is the essence of what it's like to be in a group like that. In a split second you could be killed. And that's the way it is.

Mom and Dad Remembered

When I made *Mean Streets* I put my mother in the picture. She also helped me out in my student films. My mother and father would show up sometimes and be in them or bring some food or whatever. My mother was in *Taxi Driver* but we cut her out. She gets out of a cab with lots of shopping bags, you know. But we didn't need it so we cut it out. They were both in *Raging Bull*. My father's the other guy that's always with Tommy Como. They would show up on the set and bring food. It became more of a family thing, which is what it should have been because there's so much tension and so much anger when you're trying to make a schedule. When you're trying to deal with studio problems. Why should that come onto the set? On the set it should be funny and warm and enjoyable, like being with family members. Especially when my mother and father hung around with the actors between takes and it became something quite, quite lively. And so they became a major part of that. They always talked to De Niro, Keitel, and Pesci, as if they were their sons, also.

Cape Fear (1991)

Robert De Niro; Nick Nolte; Jessica Lange; Juliette Lewis; Joe Don Baker; Robert Mitchum; Gregory Peck; Martin Balsam; Illeana Douglas; Fred Dalton Thompson.

Cape Fear was a project that De Niro and Spielberg asked me to do. I had just come off *Goodfellas.* Spielberg always told me he was going to produce a picture of mine someday and it was going to make the most money that any of my films ever made. Not that I would make it personally, but the film will have made it—of course! But I was not really interested in doing it. And then a couple of things came together that allowed me to do it rather quickly. A wonderful writer by the name of Wesley Strick was involved, and I found I could work with him very well. I changed certain aspects of the story that

were more to my taste. De Niro had a great desire to play Max Cady. We shot the film in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, and it took a year to do from start of shooting to release date. And Spielberg was right. Of all my films, it made the most money.

Director J. Lee Thompson's original *Cape Fear* was pure "B" film. It was a little gem of a movie. So you have a situation that you can only do kind of an evolution or a revision of that. The version I made is not a pure piece. It reflects the society of today. It wasn't a "B" film. It was a psychological thriller, in a way. I wanted to work with suspense—like the sequence between De Niro and Juliette Lewis where they're in the theater. That kind of suspense—the seduction of suspense, you know.

Gregory Peck was concerned, and he didn't understand at first what we were going to do with it. Then De Niro and myself met with him in Paris and told him we wanted him to bless the film. I adore him. We always had a good feeling about him being in the film. Bob Mitchum was a very important actor for us to have. He was kind of a rebel figure, which I know De Niro and a number of other people felt comfortable with. Martin Balsam was one of the finest actors to come out of the American tradition. He was such an extraordinary actor. He was just one of those New York–style actors that I felt comfortable with.

> *He lets you find your own way. But the marvelous thing about him—which most directors can't do—is that if you get in trouble, and you come to the director and say I'm in trouble, the director sure as hell better know how to get you out of it. That's what he can do.*
>
> *Paul Newman—Actor*

The Age of Innocence (1993)

Daniel Day-Lewis; Michelle Pfeiffer; Winona Ryder; Linda Faye Farkas; Michael Rees Davis; Terry Cook; Jon Garrison; Richard E. Grant; Alec McCowen; Geraldine Chaplin; Mary Beth Hurt.

During the Eighties I was toying with different ideas of different types of films to make, and my friend Jay Cocks gave me the book by Edith Wharton and said that he felt if I ever read it I would find it personal and strong. He felt that I could make a really beautiful film out of it. So when I did read it,

enough had happened in my life for me to suddenly look up and say, you know, I think I could interpret this on film. I think it had to do with the signs and meanings in a certain society. Emotion, passion—that had to be kept at bay. It had to be kept covered. Having fallen in love with a lot of Kubrick's films and looking at *Barry Lyndon* a number of times and realizing there are certain scenes where people say certain things but they mean other things. What they say sounds like it's coming from the greatest book of etiquette and manners that you can imagine. But in the meantime it's really saying, "You're going to be killed in a second, you know." I feel that there's not much difference between civilization and those impulses.

Jay Cocks did a great job on the dialogue because there are many different ways to say it and many different ways you could interpret it. The actors were wonderful. Michelle Pfeiffer, Danny Lewis, and the others did an extraordinary job. I can only tell you it was fun.

Casino (1995)

Robert De Niro; Sharon Stone; Joe Pesci; James Woods; Don Rickles; Alan King; Kevin Pollak; L. Q. Jones; Dick Smothers; Frank Vincent; John I. Bloom; Pasquale Cajano; Melissa Prophet; Bill Allison.

It was the unbelievable strangeness that, as the brains behind an operation, De Niro's character would fall for this woman. The only mistake he makes in his life is falling for a certain kind of woman. That story was written five or six thousand years ago. It never changes. The conflict was so strong, and I thought, you place that against the background of Vegas—and Vegas represents America at the time—and there's no limit, you know? You want money—how much? Make it billions. You want drugs? Keep taking drugs until you blow your brains out. Drinking, women—there's no limit. There were no limits in America in the Eighties—there were no limits. People came in like robber barons and didn't give anything back to the country. Didn't give anything back to society. Just took the money and ran.

This is the same thing these people in this story were doing. At least they were honest about it, you know? So, that's what fascinated me about creating that world. Creating a world where there are no limits. What do you become as a human being? What do you become? The character that De Niro played liked to use his brain. He's a genius with figures and yet he falls for this woman and he falls hard.

Sharon Stone was amazing. We had been shooting in the casino at night, which was another experience altogether, because we weren't important, compared to the high rollers. When the high rollers came in, we had to move. We would just keep working, but it was madness, and the noise in the casino at night was really something. We never knew whether it was day or night, either. Anyway, Sharon, she only did a couple of scenes in the casino. When she arrived and we began working with her, she *was* the character of Ginger, you know. Her stance, her stature, the way she moved, and the way she spoke. She *was* that person and understood it completely.

A Slight Diversion

I never took any acting courses. I loved film acting when I was a kid. I loved Hollywood movie stars. I loved British actors a great deal, the way they dealt with language. I liked that very much as a child. I could see it. I could feel it. But I was shocked when I saw *On the Waterfront,* because that was with people I knew. People I was standing outside on the street with, or my uncle, or my cousins or friends. And so, I had a certain connection with that, and that brought back the memories of the Italian [postwar] era films that I saw when I was five or six years old. And so, I come from films like *Mean Streets* and *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull* and *Goodfellas*. It was very easy for me to deal with actors as if they were part of the street. They didn't act it. They'd work it. They *behaved*. Of course there was a great deal of acting involved, but they really *behaved*, because you could turn the camera off and they were the same way.

Kundun (1997)

Tenzin Thuthob Tsarong; Gyurme Tethong; Tulku Jamyang Kunga Tenzin; Tenzin Yeshi Paichang; Techo Gyalpo; Tsweang Migyur Khangsar; Geshi Yeshi Gyatso.

My first interest was religion. It's been my main preoccupation and my main concern over the years. I was much taken with the idea that human beings are basically good rather than evil. But I was always fascinated by the fact that evil does exist. I wondered if there was a religion that could deal with compassion on a pure level. That led to the idea of the Dalai Lama as a man who is a moral authority for an age in which—I sound like I'm getting older and

more conservative here—but for an age where things are more open. Things are more readily available, let's say. Temptation is more readily available. An interest in Eastern religions and philosophies led me to examine many things that the Dalai Lama had said, about being aware of the political situation but not taking a political stand directly in the film. I mean, obviously, it does, because the Chinese do come in. There are arguments. There are a couple of moments of some violence. But I was more interested in dealing with the aesthetics of the philosophy of the Dalai Lama—that the transcendence is through the aesthetics. It comes through in how they behave and how they relate to each other and the reverence in which they relate to him and how he relates to the world.

I'm not saying I'm a Buddhist. I don't say that I made a Buddhist film. I'm talking about the aesthetics, the philosophy and the compassion.

We wanted to shoot in India but there was a great deal of difficulty and we never got permission—and understandably so. They had taken in the Dalai Lama and the community of refugees from Tibet. China's on their border, so it's a bit of a problem. We had shot *Last Temptation of Christ* in Morocco and we thought we could make *Kundun* work there also. We felt we could create the impression of Tibet. Not really Tibet, but the impression of Tibet. It was a logistical nightmare to make the picture, but it was worth it.

It's one of the few films of mine that I can look at. Probably the only one, I think. I mean, not that I don't like my films, it's just that they remind me of certain times and people, some of whom are gone now. I get too sentimental about it. I can't watch them. Some of them are far too personal for me to go through that process again. I just won't do it. But *Kundun* is something else. It's peaceful and it's interior rather than exterior. It's not according to traditional Western drama. It's on a different level entirely. I tried to explore where inaction becomes action. Passivity becomes active.

Bringing Out the Dead (1999)

Nicolas Cage; Patricia Arquette; Marc Anthony; John Goodman; Cliff Curtis; Mary Beth Hurt; Ving Rhames; Tom Sizemore; Aida Turturro.

Bringing Out the Dead just fell into my hands through Scott Rudin. I was working on *Dino* with Nick Pileggi and Tom Hanks, and there was a delay in that. At the same time, the book for *Dead* was given to me to read. I thought

it was wonderful, and I said, the only man who could write this is Paul Schrader, because he could understand this character who was going through a spiritual crisis at night in New York City over a long Labor Day weekend with a full moon. Which means that, if you're an ambulance driver, it's going to be a wild three nights. Since Joe Connelly wrote the book, and he's Irish Catholic, I think he could see the threads of religion in there. And, naturally, I was going to be attracted to it. There's a story but there's no plot. I like that because I lose patience when I direct plot. I like to see plot. I like to see films with plot, but I try not to do that sort of thing. I always try to do something else, and *Bringing Out the Dead* was one of those things. Luckily, it fell into our hands.

The first guy that came to mind was Nick Cage, because his face and his eyes are so expressive. And Schrader wrote a beautiful script, I thought. It deals with the same thing I've just been talking about in *Kundun* and *Mean Streets*. Here are these people who want to make a difference. Here's this poor alcoholic who's been living in the streets for ten years and he falls down every night at 4:00 A.M. He falls down in a certain place and they go pick him up. They bring him to a hospital. They bring him back. Somebody's got to do it. They touch people. They deal with people that we don't. They are the doctors of the streets in a way. But these men and women can only do this for a certain amount of time before they start to crack, before they start to think, what difference am I making? Am I making any difference at all? Is there a scheme of things? Is there a plan, you know? Is there such a thing as God? You're only human and you start to question things and that's what the film's about. Cage's character goes through a crisis, and by the end he comes out.

Final Thoughts

I look back now and I just think I tried to depict certain types of places and certain types of people as honestly as possible. Not necessarily the physical aspect of them, but the nature of the people and the nature of the society they're in. In the case of *Mean Streets, Alice*, *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull*, *Goodfellas*, and *Age of Innocence*, I tried to be true to those human emotions that make up what we are as people.

Note: After this interview was completed, Scorsese went into production on *Gangs of New York.*

Martin Scorsese Filmography

Vesuvius VI (1959)
What's a Nice Girl Like You Doing in a Place Like This? (1963)
It's Not Just You, Murray! (1964)
The Big Shave (1967)
Who's That Knocking at My Door? (1968)
Street Scenes (1970)
Boxcar Bertha (1972)
Badge 373 [some scenes] (1973)
Mean Streets (1973)
Italianamerican (1974)
Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore (1974)
Taxi Driver (1976)
New York, New York (1977)
The Last Waltz (1978)
American Boy: A Profile of Steven Prince (1978)
Raging Bull (1980)
Kind of Comedy (1983)
Amazing Stories (TV series, episode "Mirror, Mirror," 1986)
After Hours (1985)
Color of Money (1986)
Bad (1987)
The Last Temptation of Christ (1988)
New York Stories (Segment 1, 1989)
Made in Milan (1990)
Goodfellas (1990)
Cape Fear (1991)
The Age of Innocence (1993)
Casino (1995)
A Personal Journey with Martin Scorsese Through American Movies (TV, 1995)
Kundun (1997)
Dolce Cinema, II (TV, 1999)
Bringing Out the Dead (1999)

Il Mio Viaggio in Italia (2001)
Gangs of New York (2001)
Dino (2002)
The Gangs of New York (2002)

Awards and Nominations

Academy Awards, USA
The Age of Innocence, Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium, (nominated, shared with Jay Cocks), 1994
Goodfellas, Best Director (nominated) 1991
Goodfellas, Best Writing, Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium (nominated, shared with Nicholas Pileggi), 1991
The Last Temptation of Christ, Best Director (nominated), 1989
Raging Bull, Best Director (nominated), 1981

American Film Institute
Life Achievement Award, 1997

American Society of Cinematographers
Board of Governors Award, 1995

Australian Film Institute
Kundun, Best Foreign Film Award (nominated, shared with Barbara DeFina), 1998

Berlin International Film Festival
Cape Fear, Golden Berlin Bear (nominated), 1992

Bodil Awards
The Age of Innocence, Best American Film, 1994
Goodfellas, Best American Film, 1991

British Academy Awards
Goodfellas, Best Adapted Screenplay, 1991
Goodfellas, Best Direction, 1991
Goodfellas, Best Film (shared with Irwin Winkler), 1991
The King of Comedy, Best Direction (nominated), 1984
Taxi Driver, Best Direction (nominated), 1977
Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore, Best Direction (nominated), 1976

Cannes Film Festival
After Hours, Best Director, 1986
After Hours, Golden Palm (nominated), 1986
The King of Comedy, Golden Palm (nominated), 1983
Taxi Driver, Golden Palm, 1976
Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore, Golden Palm (nominated), 1975

Cesar Awards
Honorary Award, 2000
Goodfellas, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1991
After Hours, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1987

Chicago Film Critics Association Awards
Goodfellas, Best Director, 1991

David di Donatello Awards
Special David, 2001
Golden Medal of the Minister of Tourism, 1982

Edgar Allan Poe Awards
Goodfellas, Best Motion Picture (nominated), 1991

Emmy Awards
Eric Clapton: Nothing But the Blues (an *In the Spotlight* PBS special), Outstanding Cultural Program (nominated, shared with David Horn, John Beurg, Stephan "Scooter" Weintraub, and Ken Ehrlick), 1995

Film Society of Lincoln Center
Gala Tribute, 1998

Golden Globe Awards

Casino, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1996
The Age of Innocence, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1994
Goodfellas, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1991
Goodfellas, Best Screenplay (nominated, shared with Nicholas Pileggi), 1991
Raging Bull, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1981

Gotham Awards

Lifetime Achievement Award, 1993

Independent Spirit Awards

The Grifters, Best Feature (shared with Robert A. Harris and Jim Painter), 1991
After Hours, Best Director (nominated), 1986

Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards

Goodfellas, Best Director, 1990
New Generation Award, 1976

National Board of Review Awards

Billy Wilder Award, 1998
The Age of Innocence, Best Director, 1993

National Society of Film Critics Awards

Goodfellas, Best Director, 1991
Raging Bull, Best Director, 1981
Taxi Driver, Best Director, 1977

New York Film Critics Circle Awards

Goodfellas, Best Director, 1990

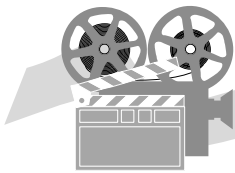
Venice Film Festival

Career Golden Lion: In Celebration of the Cinema's 100th Anniversary, 1995
Goodfellas, Best Director, Silver Lion, 1990

Writers Guild of America

Goodfellas, Best Screenplay Based on Material from Another Medium (nominated, shared with Nicholas Pileggi), 1991

Mean Streets, Best Drama Written Directly for the Screen (nominated, shared with Mardik Martin), 1974



3

The Films of Steven Spielberg

As a filmmaker, Spielberg has directed, produced, or executive-produced seven of the twenty top-grossing films of all time, including *Jurassic Park* and *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial.* In addition, he directed and produced the multiple Academy Award–winning motion pictures *Schindler's List* and *Saving Private Ryan.*

Born on December 18, 1946, in Cincinnati, Ohio, Spielberg was raised in the suburbs of Haddonfield, New Jersey, and Scottsdale, Arizona. He started making amateur films while still in his teens, later studying film at California State University, Long Beach. In 1969, his twenty-two-minute short *Amblin* was shown at the Atlanta Film Festival, which led to his becoming the youngest director ever to be signed to a long-term deal with a major Hollywood studio.

Four years later, he directed the suspenseful telefilm *Duel*, which garnered both critical and audience attention. Anyone who is not familiar with the rest of Spielberg's work has to be living on another planet.

Note: We were informed beforehand that Steven's time would be limited. On the day of the interview, on the Universal Studios lot, Spielberg shows up at the appointed time and shakes hands with everyone. These were his first comments as he fumbled with an old pair of eyeglasses.

I actually lost my glasses. This is like a substitute pair of old glasses. So, you're really blurry. These prescriptions are old. It's just very strange looking at life and everybody. It seems like I can reach out and touch you here, but you're actually over there. I know that. Okay, I have a headache already. [*Everybody laughs, including Spielberg.*]

The Conversation

I just like telling stories. I mean, I just told stories my entire life. Even before I was making movies, I told stories. Not all of them are true. I tell stories today to my kids. I haven't turned one of those into a film yet, but the kids enjoy them.

The very earliest memory that I recall that associates itself to filmmaking is this urgent need to not be punished by my parents for wrecking my Lionel train set. I had these trains that I used to wreck and crash. I was a big train enthusiast, and I actually still am. I love electric trains. I would often bump them into each other. And they would break sometimes. My dad got frustrated one day. He said to me, "If I have to take one of these trains one more time back to the Lionel shop to get it repaired, I'm taking the entire train set away from you. That's the end."

I remember trying to figure out how I could have this thrill of the great train wreck and not be deprived of my trains. So, I borrowed this little 8mm movie camera and I actually filmed the train wreck. I didn't really understand what I was doing, but intuitively I knew that if one train went left to right and the second train went right to left, and they both met in the middle, it's a third cut. It's pretty much what I used to do when I used to stick my eye down within an inch above the tracks to get the perspective of the trains going by. I did that on film and didn't wreck the trains too bad. But I was able to run the film over and over again. And I really believe that was the first time I realized the power of film, you know. To be able to get away with something and not get punished for it too badly.

I also watched a lot of movies. I watched a lot of films because I didn't really go to an accredited film school. I went to Cal State Long Beach and they didn't have a film program. They had theater, arts, radio, television, but not film. So, I have been making my films, 8mm and 16mm films, ever since I was a kid—twelve years old. I learned from everybody and everything. I watched a lot of movies, watched a lot of television. And I read a lot of books on moviemaking. I tried to meet as many people as I possibly could. I came to Universal and sort of unofficially moved onto the lot to try

to learn all I could about filmmaking. So, I kind of put myself through a practical film school, which was whatever I could get my hands on at the time.

My first TV program was the Joan Crawford segment of the *Night Gallery* trilogy in 1969. My first day of shooting was pretty great actually, because Ms. Crawford was wonderful. She treated me like I was an old veteran. She didn't treat me like I was some first-timer, which I was, or kid in his early twenties, which I was. Later I found out that she was offended that Henry Hathaway or one of those great veteran directors had not been hired to direct her. But she hid that from me. And I think that it taught me a great lesson in that all those actors and actresses that came out of the 1930s and 40s were professionally raised and trained. Their habits were so professional that she had to look upon me as her director and not as some kid out of Sid Shienberg's [Shienberg was a Universal Executive] White Elephant Sale. I often felt that I was, because Sid gave me my break and assigned me to direct Joan Crawford when I was still a kid. But she was great.

It was later in the show that it became just a mess, and the show kind of got away from me. I had never worked with a professional crew before. I ran two or three days over schedule. The producer showed up on the set and began making changes over my shoulder, and it didn't end well. But she was always great and always highly respectful of the office of director, if not the director himself.

> *It's hard to say why someone is successful or not successful. But Steven has all of the mental capacities and the film chops to make successful movies.*
>
> *Harrison Ford—Actor*

Duel (1973)

Dennis Weaver.

I actually pursued *Duel*. That was something that was not being offered to me. My secretary at the time showed me the *Playboy* short story and told me who was producing it for ABC. And I went to the producer and kind of begged him for the job. He saw a couple of little TV shows I had made and he gave me the job. It was a huge break for me.

Instead of doing storyboards, I basically had a road map of the entire screenplay put on a kind of mural. I wrapped this piece of paper around the entire motel room way out in the California desert where we shot for fourteen days. This road map was simply to acquaint me in intimate detail with all the twists and turns of the story and all the events that Richard Matheson had put into his teleplay. I really didn't need to have a screenplay folded up in my back pocket when I was directing. I pretty much memorized the map and knew every beat. When I look back on it, I have very good memories of that shoot.

I used five, six cameras sometimes, because in fourteen days there was no time to really shoot a movie. I would just put the cameras on different sides of the road and have the truck and the car pass those cameras. And then I was able to rob Peter to pay Paul and steal a shot that I had shot on, like, a Tuesday, for a scene that I didn't even realize I needed in the editing room weeks later. It was amazing how it all came together. I had six film editors working on it because I had an airdate of three weeks after the last shot. It was supposed to be on ABC three weeks hence. It was crazy. So, six editors were hired. And I was literally running from editing room to editing room, supervising the edit of my little film. I have never worked as hard or as fast on anything except for *Duel*.

The Sugarland Express (1974)

Goldie Hawn; Ben Johnson; Michael Sacks; William Atherton; Gregory Walcott; Steve Kanaly; Louise Latham.

I remember picking up the newspaper one day in the little apartment I was renting, and the headline read MODERN DAY BONNIE AND CLYDE. It was a true story of this couple in Texas, and I thought it would make a terrific story. Two friends of mine, Hal Baldwin and Matthew Robbins, collaborated with me and wrote the screenplay. Then I took it to Sid Shienberg at Universal who sent me to Jennings Lang who was in charge of movies at the time. He read the script and liked it, but he said he couldn't give me a shot at directing the movie unless I put a movie star in the picture. The story revolved around three central characters in the police car, and he said one of them had to be a movie star. And he said, " If you score a movie star, we'll make the picture with you, kid." He added "kid" at the end of it.

I went out to Jon Voight, who said no. He was very complimentary of the screenplay but I think he had a scheduling conflict. Then producers Dick Zanuck and David Brown came onto the project to help me get it made, because I wasn't making any headway. They suggested Goldie Hawn. We sent the script to Goldie, and it was like a miracle. I went to her house one day and met with her. She loved the character Lou Jean Poplin and had a lot of great ideas about it. She had some changes she wanted me to make, which I did, and then she said yes. No sooner than Goldie said yes we had a start date. It was just amazing.

Along the way, everything prepares you for everything. My little three-minute short films for the Boy Scouts prepared me for my thirty-six-minute 16mm films when I was in college. One thing gives you kind of a level of experience, and you climb up. You achieve that, and you move on to the next level of experience. So, everything I've ever done has prepared me for the next thing I do.

The most difficult thing about *Sugarland* was just the sheer logistics of having, like, ninety or a hundred police cars and civilian cars on rural country roads. And having to coordinate all of that, and having cars go off the road and get stuck in the dirt on the side of the road was complicated. There were production delays and rain delays—I had never done any movie that logistically complicated. *Duel* was a truck and a car. *The Sugarland Express* was a police car and about a hundred cars following, sometimes at relatively high speeds. So there were a lot of safety issues and concerns that we had to attend to. I was also kind of telling a very intimate story surrounded by all of this visual chaos. It was the biggest bite I had ever taken out of the cinematic pie up to that point in my career, and I wasn't prepared for it. But I learned how to do it—sort of on-the-job training.

I wanted to be successful, and everyone was telling me that, with an ending like that, it's not going to be successful, where the husband gets killed and the cop gets away and the wife is destitute and goes back to jail and never gets her child. But I saw myself as a kind of young artist who refused to compromise for the commercial returns, and I remember fighting for that ending. Actually it was very similar to how the story ended in real life, with the husband getting killed by the police. And I fought, and I fought, and I fought. And then finally—I guess about four months before the film was about to be released—I had this tremendous change of mind. I said, you know, I want a hit. I really want a hit. Maybe all of these studio pundits are

right. So I went to Dick and David and suggested we change the ending. They get across the Rio Grande. They get to Mexico. She gets her baby back. It's a happy ending. And Dick and David said that they were artists, too, and I should end the film the way my great script ended. They said, it's got to end that way. They reminded me that I shouldn't cop out and sell out, and I always loved them for that. In my moment of weakness, they kind of put some backbone into me.

Jaws (1975)

Roy Scheider; Robert Shaw; Richard Dreyfuss; Lorraine Gary; Murray Hamilton; Carl Gottlieb; Jeffrey Kramer; Susan Backlinie; Jonathan Filley.

I was meeting with Dick Zanuck and I think David Brown on the cut of *The Sugarland Express,* and I noticed this pile of papers in their secretary's office that said *Jaws* on the cover. It turned out to be galleys from the as-yet unpublished novel by Peter Benchley. I remember asking if I could read it and Dick and David said yes but there was another director on it already. *Jaws*—I thought it was a story about dental work. I didn't know it was about the ocean and a shark. So, I took it to my house, and I read it over the weekend, and I flipped out for it. I just went nuts, especially the last 150 pages, which was the sea hunt for this great white shark. It reminded me of *Duel* because *Duel* was about this unknown force chasing this innocent bystander, and in *Duel* you never saw the driver of the truck. The shark was sort of a variation on the theme of *Duel*, so I really related to that material. It was a part of my life, and that story was still fresh in my mind. So I told Dick and David that if anything falls out with this director who was on the picture, I would do it. One day they called and said that the director did fall out, and the picture was mine.

I spent many days just sitting on the shark barge, waiting for the effects to be ready so I could go to work and direct the picture, all the time wondering if this film was going to end my career. I was going to end my career on the water, which I didn't like to begin with. Would I ever work again? Those thoughts came to mind all the time. There were rampant rumors about my self-indulgence and flagrant spending, twice the original budget—all of which were true. Although I wasn't being irresponsible. We were just at the mercy of the forces of nature and the forces of technology, which is what that shark was. He was a technological marvel, but he also didn't work that well.

It forced me to do a lot of compromising, but they were all good compromises. The film was actually scarier because the shark didn't work that well. With the absence of the shark I had just the ocean and the power of suggestion. I let the audience use their imaginations instead of always seeing the shark. I think that really ramped up the suspense of that picture tenfold. If the shark worked 100 percent of the time and I had the shark in all the intended scenes, the film would have been just a monster movie. So I think I was saved by defective technology.

I think all filmmakers are surprised when people like their films. Early on, I used to think, gee, this could be a big commercial hit. A shark and three guys in a boat and this big sea hunt. But as you become familiar with your own material you become less and less enamored of it. You kind of fall out of love, and it becomes a real love-hate relationship. By the time I had finished *Jaws* I was so physically depleted because of the endurance run—just getting the thing made. Then with some of the negative press about all the production woes, I was afraid that would spill over to the commercial success or failure of the picture. I had lost my objectivity. I had no idea what we had made. It was only after I previewed it for the first time in Dallas, Texas, and I saw and heard that audience, that I thought we had something. They had never been on production, never had to fight the weather, never had to deal with the growing pains of getting that movie made. They just came to it kind of blind-sided with a little help from the book, which was a huge best-seller by that time. They just ate the movie up, and that was the first time I realized that we might have something, here.

Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977)

Richard Dreyfuss; Francois Truffaut; Teri Garr; Melinda Dillon; Bob Balaban.

I had been trying to make *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* even before *Jaws,* and nobody would give me a meeting. They wouldn't read my treatment; they wouldn't hear my ideas about a UFO project. I couldn't get anybody to listen to me except my producers. I had two wonderful producers, Michael and Julia Phillips, who risked everything and who came on board to help me launch that film. But I really couldn't get a deal on it until *Jaws* was this big hit. I discovered what a hit can do for a filmmaker, as it can for a writer, a producer, an actor, or an actress. A hit gives you kind of a carte blanche. And I, fortunately, had something I was passionate about making after *Jaws*.

In the end it was very easy getting the money from Columbia once *Jaws* helped us get our foot in the door.

Firelight [an early amateur film] was the inspiration for *Close Encounters.* I just had a keen interest on the whole subject of outer space and the chance that there's life out there and the chance that they might have come here at some time or another. So I was keenly interested in the subjects.

Every young filmmaker wants to say something with his or her films. I just don't know anyone who doesn't really think that they have something to say when telling a story. I had a lot to say with *Close Encounters of the Third Kind,* but I was very careful not to say it so loud that the message would drown out the fact that this was also supposed to be entertainment.

The movie I always wanted was the movie that came out with the special edition, because I didn't have time to finish *Close Encounters* with the ending I really wanted. The effects took a long time. I was unhappy with my first cut. I talked Columbia into letting me write and direct five whole sequences, not just inserts as we often do when we finish a movie. We fix things with inserts and a line of dialogue here or there. I shot five huge scenes, including the discovery of Flight 19, those TBM avenger fighter-bombers that are discovered in the California desert at the beginning of the movie. That was all added after I saw my first cut and didn't like the way the film originally opened with the air traffic control scene. So, they really gambled and risked a lot to let me make my film. But I just didn't have the time to edit it the way I wanted to.

A year after the film came out and was a great success, I went back to Columbia and asked them if I could do a special edition and reedit the middle and the beginning. They said yes and gave me a million dollars if I would agree to show the inside of the mother ship. That was the compromise with Columbia. If I put in a glimpse of the mother ship from Roy's point of view, I could get the money and change the film and then they would sponsor a reissue of the picture. I did that, but I was not happy with the ending. I was happy with everything else. Now I've got the best balance on the laser disc version and someday on the DVD, which is the balance between the original film and the special edition. I've cut out the ending so you no longer see the inside of the ship. The latest version is kind of a hybrid of both pictures.

Richard Dreyfuss and I are really great friends, and we just see the world through the same eyes and we believe in the same things. When I first met Richard, which was after *American Graffiti*, I think we always felt we were kind of brothers. We've made a few pictures together, and I'm sure we'll make several more.

Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)

Harrison Ford; Karen Allen; Paul Freeman; Ronald Lacey; John Rhys-Davies; Alfred Molina; Wolf Kahler; Anthony Higgins; Vic Tablian; Don Fellows.

I was vacationing with George Lucas in Hawaii in May of 1977, the week that *Star Wars* came out, and George simply asked me what I was going to do next. I told him, I'm trying to get a meeting with producer Cubby Broccoli to convince him to let me do a James Bond picture. George told me not to waste my time, that he had a better idea called *Raiders of the Lost Ark.* He proceeded to tell me this very complicated story about this archaeologist and his search for supernatural antiquities. George didn't have much more except that concept and a couple of paintings an artist had done of Indiana Jones with the leather jacket, the fedora hat, and the whip—that was about it. I just flipped out for the idea. We shook hands and made a deal on the beaches of Hawaii to do three pictures if the first one succeeded. That's how it all began.

What George and I both shared was a great love of those B-movie cliffhanger serials back in the 1940s and 50s. There was a revival movie house in Scottsdale, Arizona, where I was raised, where they showed old movies, ten cartoons, and previews of coming attractions on Saturday mornings. Those old Republic Studios cliffhangers were in black-and-white. So, I saw a lot of the Republic serials when I was growing up in Arizona.

How a film should look is just trial and error and living with it for a while. I try to figure out what kind of story it's supposed to be. That usually happens when I'm developing a screenplay. I get a much better sense of the story I'm telling if I really spend a lot of time with the writer, too. You know, I'm pretty prepared before I shoot a picture. I know the look, the style. I know the energy and the tone. Because I've got such a clear picture in my head of what the final film should look like, the actual process of making the movie is kind of laborious and sometimes boring. The physical aspect of making a movie is trying to capture some of what you've got in your head and trying to get it up in the screen. Then when you see the sequences being assembled in the editing room, it sometimes can be the most frustrating part about making a movie. When it's not quite as good as what you had up here [*points to his head*].

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982)

Drew Barrymore; Dee Wallace-Stone; Henry Thomas; Peter Coyote; Robert MacNaughton; K. C. Martel.

I think my inspiration for *E.T.* was my interest in outer space and UFOs and the divorce of my mom and dad, which *E.T.* is essentially about. When I was shooting a scene in *Close Encounters* I had thought about *E.T.*, and what it would be like to tell a story about a single alien who comes into the life of a young boy whose father has left his mother and a special friend fills that void.

I worked with kids in *E.T.*, but I don't know if I have any kind of secret working with kids. The truth is I feel like I *am* a kid, so I think I relate to kids really well. I talk to kids like I would to you or like I would talk to friends. I don't talk to kids like they're kids. I think the whole idea is to give kids their equal due and give them a lot of respect for being people—don't be prejudiced because they're children. I allow them to have a say in the characters they're playing. And I allow them to mix their own language in with the language of the writer. Many of the wonderful lines from *E.T.* came from Drew Barrymore, Henry Thomas, and Robert MacNaughton.

The Color Purple (1985)

Danny Glover; Whoopi Goldberg; Margaret Avery; Oprah Winfrey; Willard E. Pugh; Akosua Busia; Desreta Jackson; Adolph Caesar; Rae Dawn Chong; Dana Ivey; Leonard Jackson; Bennet Guillory.

My inspiration for *Color Purple* was the Alice Walker novel, which Quincy Jones brought to Kathy Kennedy who brought it to me. I loved the novel. I didn't know if it could be a film, because the novel is just a series of letters. I didn't quite know how to interpret that. I think the biggest challenge of *Color Purple* wasn't the making of the movie, it was developing the script. The biggest challenge of the whole project was trying to get that book onto film somehow.

When I didn't get a nomination for *Purple* I don't think it hurt me as much as surprised me. I think I was more surprised and hurt when I heard all of my colleagues on *Color Purple* nominated. And when I wasn't among them I

thought there must have been a mistake, because they surely wouldn't have left out the director. But of course they left out the director. But then in recent years it's been great. In the last five years, I've certainly received more than enough awards to last me the rest of my life. I never expected to win an Academy Award, to be quite honest with you. But little experiences like *E.T.* and *Color Purple* proved to me that, well, there are other things in life. And I thought I would never win an Oscar but I'd be able to keep making movies. And that was okay too.

Empire of the Sun (1987)

Christian Bale; John Malkovich; Miranda Richardson; Nigel Havers; Joe Pantoliano; Leslie Phillips; Masoto Ibu; Emily Richard; Rupert Frazer; Peter Gale; Takatoro Kataoka; Ben Stiller.

That was another project that I knew nothing about. The person who told me about the project was David Lean. George Lucas and I had met him together in London and took him out to dinner. He was probably one of the greatest influences on my entire career. I've seen his films numerous times. I've studied them all from *Breaking the Sound Barrier* right through *Passage to India*. I was just totally enamored of this man. One day he called me up and he asked me for a favor. I couldn't believe David Lean was asking me for a favor. He said there was a book he read called *Empire of the Sun* that he would consider directing and could I get me some information on who owned the book. I made some phone calls and discovered that Warner Bros. had the project and a screenplay had been written, but there was a director assigned to the project. I had to call David Lean back, give him the bad news that it was unavailable. Then about eight or nine months later I get a call telling me that the original director was no longer doing the film. So, I called David back. I couldn't wait to get him on the telephone to tell him *Empire of the Sun* was available again. And the script was done and it's free. I told David I was sending it to him and he said no, forget it. He had spent eight months thinking about it and there were other things he wanted to move on to now. He also thought he was too old to work with children. He told me I should do it now, and he proceeded to talk me into directing this movie. He told me that after seeing *E.T.* I absolutely had to make the movie because he thought I knew how to handle kids. That's how it all happened.

Steven Spielberg luckily now is being given the respect that he deserves as a filmmaker who wants to tell the story that he's set out to tell.

Laura Dern—Actress

Jurassic Park (1993)

Sam Neill; Laura Dern; Jeff Goldblum; Richard Attenborough; Bob Peck; Martin Ferrero; B. D. Wong; Joseph Mazzello; Ariana Richards; Samuel L. Jackson; Wayne Knight.

It's interesting, the way I became involved in that. Michael Crichton and I were in my office one day. I was going to direct a script of his similar to his life, called *E.R.* At that time, we were developing *E.R.* as a movie. While we were taking a break, I asked him what else he was working on. He told me that what he was doing was kind of a big secret. I love when they say it's a big secret. So, I spent the next few hours trying to get Michael to tell me the secret.

He finally agreed if I promised not to tell anybody—which I never did, by the way. He told me he was working on a novel about dinosaurs and DNA. That's all he gave me, and I got it. So I asked him if he meant they were coming back and he said that in his story they were. I got him to promise to let me read the novel when he was done, which he did, and as soon as I did I committed to direct it, because he wouldn't sell it to me as a producer. Universal bought the rights. Then the screenplay for *E.R.* was pushed off into the "wait-and-see" box. The weird thing is, about three years later we dusted off *E.R.* and sold it to NBC and it became a television series.

The biggest obstacle in making the film was how to do the dinosaurs. At first I was going to do the dinosaurs in stop motion. Claymation figures that you shoot one frame at a time, like the *King Kong* and the *Sinbad* movies were made. And I was willing to accept that because I had the greatest animator in the world working on *Jurassic Park*, a man named Phil Tippett who was a genius at stop motion.

Then Dennis Muren at Industrial Light & Magic told me he was working on something based on what we had started. The first computer graphic image ever to be shot and put in a movie was in a film I produced and Barry Levinson directed, called *Young Sherlock Holmes.* It was this image of a knight who jumps out of a stained-glass window with a sword and accosts this priest. He told me that since Jim Cameron had done those miraculous CGI

shots in the *Terminator* and *The Abyss,* they now thought they could create a complete CGI animal—like a T-Rex. Dennis went into the lab and began experimenting up there in northern California and came back one day and showed me the first test of a CGI animal. It was phenomenal. The movie and all my aspirations for it just sort of turned on a dime, and it became a different movie because of what we were able to do with the animals.

Schindler's List (1993)

Liam Neeson; Ben Kingsley; Ralph Fiennes; Caroline Goodall; Jonathan Sagall; Embeth Davidtz.

Schindler's List took me over a decade to do simply because I recognized its importance. I recognized also the extreme damage that it could do if it was not made right. If it didn't portray the experience of Holocaust survivors with honor and remembrance, then it would do more harm than good. And so, the responsibility for me was daunting. So daunting it put me off the project for almost ten years until I was emotionally ready. I've often said that I had to grow up. I had to have a child of my own, which I had three years after Universal bought the novel for me. My first child was born, and I think I grew up overnight. Suddenly the film began to have more importance to me, because it was something I wanted to leave behind for my kids. So, someday, when they asked me what I did, instead of telling them about all the big gothic entertainment, I could tell them that here was a piece of history that I thought they should know about. This is something that happened to our people, and to all people. And that's probably why it took me that long to make the movie.

I think the making of that movie was the most profoundly sad experience I had. It wasn't difficult making *Schindler's List*. It was just terrifying and deeply, deeply saddening. We shot it in the middle of winter in Poland. We shot it at Auschwitz and other camps and shot in Schindler's actual apartment. We shot it in an actual Jewish ghetto. And because the locations were so ripe with history, there were so many ghosts in all of our lives, just kind of pushing us to honestly tell the story the way it happened. We had survivors coming from all over the world to witness the recreation of their stories. Everybody was sad. It was just a sad time for all of us.

I wanted people to die the way they do in real life. When people really get

shot in the head they just fall. It just sort of cuffs the motor, and they just fall like a sack of flour. There's no Sam Peckinpah ballet to it. There are no fake blood bags in slow motion. You're dead. Done. It's final. It's very hard to get an actor to trust gravity to bring them to the ground safely. And actors will always use their arm to break their fall. Even if they're stunt people they'll find some way to protect themselves when they fall. So, I actually used very lifelike mannequins. A few were suspended by wires, so when they were shot, the squib that went off in the head also severed the wire. The mannequins will fall just like people when they're shot in the head.

I think *Schindler's List* is the best film I've ever made, and you know, I'm happy about that. I'm really happy I'm able to admit that I made a picture that's better than anything else I think I've ever made. It was a great honor that the film stimulated conversation everywhere in the world about the Holocaust and also allowed me to create the Survivors of the Shoah Foundation, where we've already achieved, I think, fifty thousand interviews of survivors on videotape. It's testimony that will be disseminated someday in schools, Holocaust museums, colleges, and high schools around the world.

Amistad (1997)

Anthony Hopkins; Matthew McConaughey; Nigel Hawthorne; Morgan Freeman; Pete Postlethwaite; Djimon Hounsou; Stellan Skarsgaard; Anna Paquin; David Paymer.

Debbie Allen kept saying that I had to make this movie. She kept finding different ways of talking me into it. She finally told me that I had to make the movie for my black kids, because she knew I had two African-American kids. And she was right. I really did make this film for them.

I felt it was a story that had to be told. It was also a very compelling piece of American-African history. I'm really not attracted by messages as much as I'm attracted by good stories. I don't care where the story takes place or who it's about. If I find a good story that really won't leave me alone, then I can't leave it alone. I have to make a movie out of it.

> *He has the ability to focus on the set and get what he wants. Everything else falls to the wayside.*
>
> *Tom Hanks—Actor*

Saving Private Ryan (1998)

Tom Hanks; Tom Sizemore; Edward Burns; Matt Damon; Jeremy Davies; Vin Diesel; Adam Goldberg; Barry Pepper; Giovanni Ribisi.

Saving Private Ryan was sort of a tribute and honor to my dad, who had all my life told me about his experiences in World War II as a radio operator on a B-25 in Burma. He inspired me. He was always asking me why I didn't make a real World War II picture, a realistic one. The wonderful screenplay by Robert Rodat had a central drama, that kind of moral question: Do you sacrifice eight to save one? What price glory? It had all of that storytelling protoplasm. It was also an opportunity to tie together the experiences of World War II, Korean War, Vietnam, and Desert Storm veterans and to make this a movie for soldiers.

Tom Hanks and I were more concerned about honoring veterans and getting them to approve of our picture. I really wanted to make it as realistic as the experiences that they were communicating to me and to Stephen Ambrose, our gracious historian and consultant. I just did my best to tell their story the way they told me their stories.

It was horrendously difficult, because it was awful to see those opening scenes. None of us got used to the sights, you know. County Wexford, Ireland, is where we shot the Omaha Beach landings. That was the toughest part of the film—the first twenty-five minutes. And the last twenty-five minutes—the final battle and the opening battle were the two hardest parts of that picture to put on film.

I think if it weren't for *Schindler's List,* I would not have found a way of telling the story of *Saving Private Ryan*. *Schindler's List* gave me courage about the documentary approach to filmmaking as opposed to slick filmmaking, which I had used in all my other pictures. I left all those tools behind on *Schindler's List*. So I decided to take a lesson from *Schindler's List* and shoot *Private Ryan* the same way combat cameramen shot World War II, as low to the ground and as safely out of harm's way as possible. We were getting shots when we could, with a very shaky camera, which is exactly like the documentary footage we viewed of any of actual combat. It's extremely rough and almost dirty.

He knows, it seems to me, the whole history of film and there's hardly a movie you can mention where he doesn't have an understanding of it or some knowledge of it.

Harrison Ford—Actor

Parting Words

I get a lot of ideas that I want to turn into movies. Like I said, I love telling stories. I used to try and frighten all the kids in my Boy Scout troop with ghost stories. I've always loved ghost stories. I used to frighten my sisters with them, too. I used to even frighten myself with them. It's fun around the campfire when the only light is from the fire and it lights up your face and if you take a few steps back it's suddenly pitch black. Without a flashlight you can't see your way back to your tent. It was always fun thinking I'd tell loony, scary stories and everybody would be so scared going back to their tents. I wound up not frightening them as much as I frightened myself. I'd end up keeping myself awake, and I'd turn my flashlight on until the batteries went yellow and then disappeared and I'd have no light at all. I would always wind up frightening myself more than other people.

When I get tired of telling stories, then I'll retire from that, and I'll tell stories to my kids. I'll continue telling them privately. But I don't think that'll ever happen. I love doing this job. It's a great job to have, when I can be a part of somebody else's dream and then put that dream on the screen. Or if I can get an idea in the middle of the night and write it down on the back of a piece of paper, and eighteen months later, whatever is on the back of that piece of paper is a big movie or a small movie. I mean, that is the stuff that makes all of us want to work in this business and create and have fun.

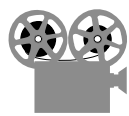
What makes me want to direct as opposed to what makes me want to produce is just how hard the tug is. It has to tug me to want to put my name on or get involved in anything. I've got to feel that it's a good story, and I want to share it. I need to feel that people should see this movie.

I have a lot of things in the works right now and we keep looking for a way to do another *Indiana Jones*. But we don't want to disappoint people, because they will be expecting a lot out of a fourth one. Harrison and George might get antsy for a fourth one, so we're still talking about it.

Steven Spielberg Filmography

The Last Gun (1959)
Escape to Nowhere (1961)
Battle Squad (1961)
Firelight (1964)
Slipstream (unfinished, 1967)
The Name of the Game, (TV series, episode "L.A. 2017," 1968)
Amblin' (1968)
Marcus Welby, M.D., (TV series, episode "The Daredevil Gesture," 1970)
Night Gallery (TV series, episode "Make Me Laugh," 1969–1970)
The Psychiatrist (TV series, episode "The Private Word of Martin Dalton," 1971)
Columbo: Murder by the Book (TV, 1971)
Owen Marshall: Counselor at Law (TV series, episode "Eulogy for a Wide Receiver," 1971)
Duel (TV, 1971)
Something Evil (TV, 1972)
Savage (TV, 1973)
The Sugarland Express (1974)
Jaws (1975)
Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977)
1941 (1979)
Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981)
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982)
Poltergeist (uncredited, 1982)
Twilight Zone: The Movie (Segment 2, 1983)
Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (1984)
Strokes of Genius (TV miniseries, introductory segments, 1984)
Amazing Stories (TV series, episodes "The Mission," "Ghost Train," 1985)
The Color Purple (1985)
Empire of the Sun (1987)
Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (1989)

Always (1989)
Hook (1991)
Jurassic Park (1993)
Schindler's List (1993)
Steven Spielberg's Director's Chair (Video game, 1996)
The Lost World: Jurassic Park (1997)
Amistad (1997)
Saving Private Ryan (1998)
The Unfinished Journey (1999)
A.I. Artificial Intelligence (2001)
Minority Report (2002)
Catch Me If You Can (2002)



Awards and Nominations

Academy Awards, USA

Saving Private Ryan, Best Director, 1999
Saving Private Ryan, Best Picture (nominated, shared with Ian Bryce, Mark Gordon II, and Gary Levinsohn), 1999
Schindler's List, Best Director, 1994
Schindler's List, Best Picture (shared with Gerald R. Molen and Branko Lustig), 1994
Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award, 1987
The Color Purple, Best Picture (nominated, shared with Kathleen Kennedy, Frank Marshall, and Quincy Jones), 1986
E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, Best Director (nominated), 1983
E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, Best Picture (nominated, shared with Kathleen Kennedy), 1983
Raiders of the Lost Ark, Best Director (nominated), 1982
Close Encounters of the Third Kind (nominated), 1978

Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films

Jurassic Park, Best Director, Saturn Award, 1994

Raiders of the Lost Ark, Best Director, Saturn Award, 1983
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Best Director, Saturn Award (tied with George Lucas for *Star Wars*), 1978

American Cinema Editors
Golden Eddie Filmmaker of the Year Award, 1990

American Film Institute
Life Achievement Award, 1995

American Society of Cinematographers
Board of Governors Award, 1994

Avoriaz Fantastic Film Festival
Schindler's List, Best Director, 1993
Duel, Grand Prize, TV, 1973

Boston Society of Film Critics Awards
E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, Best Director, 1983
Raiders of the Lost Ark, Best Director, 1982

British Academy Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Best Film (nominated, shared with Ian Bruce, Mark Gordon II, and Gary Levinsohn), 1999
Saving Private Ryan, David Lean Award for Direction (nominated), 1999
Schindler's List, Best Film (shared with Gerald R. Molen and Branko Lustig), 1994
Schindler's List, David Lean Award for Direction, 1993
E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, Best Picture (nominated, shared with Kathleen Kennedy), 1983
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Best Direction (nominated), 1979
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Best Screenplay (nominated), 1979
Jaws, Best Direction (nominated), 1976

Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Best Director, 1999

Cannes Film Festival

The Sugarland Express, Best Screenplay (shared with Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins), 1974

The Sugarland Express, Golden Palm Award (nominated), 1974

Cesar Awards

Saving Private Ryan, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1999

Saving Private Ryan, Honorary Award, 1999

Schindler's List, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1995

Chicago Film Critics Association Award

Saving Private Ryan, Best Director (nominated), 1999

Schindler's List, Best Director, 1994

Czech Film and Television Academy Awards

Saving Private Ryan, Czech Lion, 1999

Jurassic Park, Czech Lion, 1994

David di Donatello Awards

Back to the Future, Best Producer—Foreign Film, 1986

E.T., the Extra Terrestrial, Best Director—Foreign Film, 1983

Directors Guild of America

Lifetime Achievement Award, 2000

Saving Private Ryan, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (shared with Mark Huffam, Sergio Mimica-Gezzan, Adam Goodman, and Karen Richards), 1999

Amistad, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (nominated), 1998

Schindler's List, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (shared with Branko Lustig, Sergio Mimica-Gezzan, and Michael Helfand), 1994

Empire of the Sun, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (nominated), 1988

The Color Purple, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (shared with Gerald R. Molen, Pat Kehoe, Richard A. Wells, and Victoria E. Rhodes), 1986

E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (nominated), 1983
Raiders of the Lost Ark, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures Award (nominated), 1982
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (nominated), 1977
Jaws, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (nominated), 1976

European Film Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Five Continents Award (nominated), 1998

Fantasporto
Twilight Zone, The Movie, Best Film, International Fantasy Film Award (nominated, shared with Joe Dante, John Landis, and George Miller II), 1984

Giffoni Film Festival
Nocciola d'Oro Award, 1984

Golden Globe Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Best Director—Motion Picture, 1999
Amistad, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1998
Schindler's List, Best Director—Motion Picture, 1994
The Color Purple, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1986
E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1983
Raiders of the Lost Ark, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1982
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1978
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Best Screenplay—Motion Picture (nominated), 1978

Golden Satellite Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1999
Saving Private Ryan, Best Motion Picture—Drama (nominated, shared with Ian Bryce, Mark Gordon, and Gary Levinsohn), 1999
Amistad, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1998

Amistad, Best Motion Picture—Drama (nominated, shared with Debbie Allen and Colin Wilson), 1998

Hasty Pudding Theatricals
Man of the Year, 1983

Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists
Saving Private Ryan, Best Director—Foreign Film, Silver Ribbon, 1999

London Film Critics Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Director of the Year, ALFS Award (nominated), 1999
Schindler's List, Director of the Year, ALFS Award, 1995

Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Best Director, 1998
E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, Best Director, 1982

NAACP Image Awards
Vanguard Award, 2000

National Board of Review Awards
Empire of the Sun, Best Director, 1987

National Society of Film Critics Awards
Schindler's List, Best Director, 1994
E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, Best Director, 1983

Norwegian International Film Festival
Schindler's List, Best Foreign Language Feature Film, AMANDA Award, 1994

Online Film Critics Society Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Best Director, 1999

PGA Golden Laurel Awards
E.T. the Extra Terrestrial, PGA Hall of Fame—Motion Pictures (shared with Kathleen Kennedy), 2000

Saving Private Ryan, Motion Picture Producer of the Year, Milestone Award (shared with Allison Lyon Segan, Bonnie Curtis, Ian Bryce, Mark Gordon II, and Gary Levinsohn), 1999
Amistad, Theatrical Motion Pictures, Vision Award (shared with Debbie Allen and Colin Wilson II), 1998
Amistad, Motion Picture Producer of the Year (nominated, shared with Debbie Allen and Colin Wilson II), 1998
Schindler's List, Motion Picture Producer of the Year (shared with Branko Lustig and Gerald R. Molen), 1994

Rembrandt Awards
The Lost World: Jurassic Park, Best Director, Audience Award, 1998

ShoWest Convention Awards
Director of the Year, 1994
Director of the Year, 1982

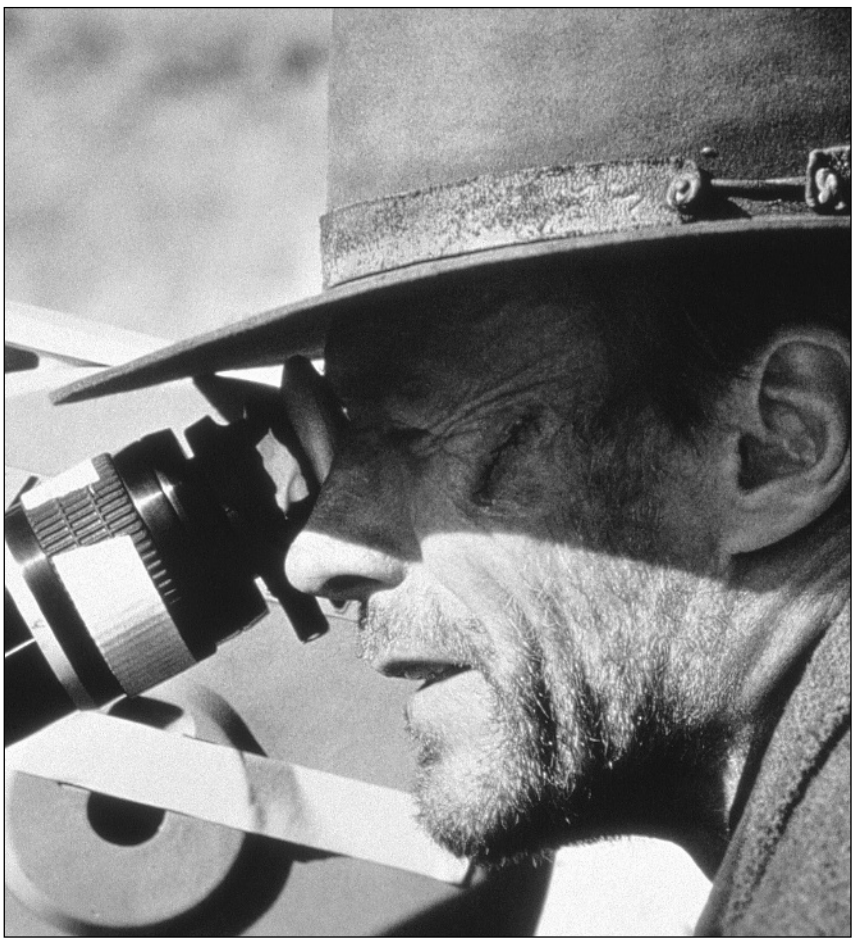
Southeastern Film Critics Association Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Best Director, 1999

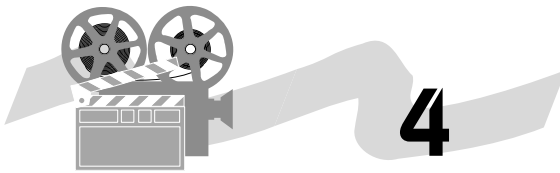
Toronto Film Critics Association Awards
Saving Private Ryan, Best Direction, 1998

Venice Film Festival
Career Golden Lion Award, 1993

Writers Guild of America
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Best Drama Written Directly for the Screen (nominated), 1978
The Sugarland Express, Best Comedy Written Directly for the Screen (nominated, shared with Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins), 1975

Young Artist Awards
Jackie Coogan Award, 1994





4

The Films of Clint Eastwood

As an actor, Clint Eastwood has given Hollywood some of its most memorable characters. His first break came in the well-documented move to the *Rawhide* television series, where he played cowboy Rowdy Yates. This led to the starring role in Italian director Sergio Leone's *Man with No Name* trilogy, comprised of *A Fistful of Dollars; For a Few Dollars More;* and *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*.

Eastwood made his directing debut in 1971 with *Play Misty for Me*, a film that he shot in his beloved adopted home of Carmel, California. Then came *High Plains Drifter* in 1973; followed by *Breezy*, also released in 1973; *The Eiger Sanction* in 1975; *The Outlaw Josey Wales* in 1976; all the way to his twenty-third feature as a director, *Space Cowboys* in 2000.

Eastwood's diverse abilities have brought him international stature and box-office success both as an actor and director, as well as numerous awards along the way.

The Conversation

I started getting interested in directing back when I did the TV series *Rawhide* in the early to mid-Sixties. I was kind of on the road to directing, because I did a few trailers and some other small things. They were even going to let me do an episode or two of *Rawhide*. Then CBS kind of reneged on the deal. They said somebody had sent down an edict that no more actors who were on the series could direct. So, they dropped me from that, and I forgot about

it for a while. Then, when I worked with Sergio Leone in Italy, I became interested in directing again, because I didn't speak Italian and I was working with an Italian crew. But I was interested in Europeans, the way they worked and everything. Director Don Siegel and I worked very closely together in the late 60s up to the early 70s, and he was very encouraging. He kept asking me why I didn't direct. But, you know, at that time not a lot of actors were directing films. But Don kept encouraging me.

I had this little script that was written by a friend of mine, called *Play Misty for Me,* and I thought I might like to direct that. Then Don encouraged me to do it and offered to sponsor me in the Directors Guild. So, I joined the DGA in 1970. I thought it was going to be a one-time deal; I thought maybe I would do it later, when I got to be a certain age and I didn't want to act anymore. That way I'd have something else going for me. But one thing has led to another, and I've just kind of been doing it off and on, on my own pictures.

When you think back on it, Bronco Billy Anderson, William S. Hart, Orson Welles, Lawrence Olivier—they all directed through the years. Marlon Brando tried it once. John Wayne tried it once. A few people would try it once or twice, and then they'd get out of it really quick once they found out what it entailed. It wasn't quite as glamorous a life as they thought. I think that it took a while for me because I had come in as sort of an outsider, as an actor who had come in through European films. Then, all of a sudden, they're thinking, this guy wants to direct. I think in the beginning there was a lot of negativity towards it. *Play Misty for Me* gets much better reviews now in hindsight than it did when it came out. There were people who were big champions of the film, but at the time, it was kind of dismissed a little bit.

I would say that Don Siegel and Sergio Leone both had a great influence on me. I learned a lot from the directors that I worked with in the *Rawhide* days, too. I got to work with an awful lot of good directors who had done films but were now directing hour-long or hour-and-a-half-long television shows, and I learned a lot from them. But I did learn the most from Don and Sergio, probably. They're such completely different people. Sergio was working in Italy and in Spain on the shoestring budgets on those early films, especially the first two. It was a chaotic bit all the time. Don Siegel, on the other hand, was extremely efficient. He knew exactly what he wanted and printed only what he wanted. Sergio would print more takes, because sometimes the first two shots he'd get scratched in the lab. You never knew what was going to happen because it was all very, very, very loose, to say the least. But we

were making a film for $200,000 with three different countries participating in it. One thing they had, though, was very good technicians.

> *As an actor's director, he just didn't interfere much. He just kind of lets you do what you were going to do. He just kind of lets you go, and that's great.*
>
> *Donna Mills—Actress*

Play Misty for Me (1971)

Clint Eastwood; Jessica Walter; Donna Mills; John Larch; Jack Ging; Irene Harvey; James McEachin; Clarice Taylor; Don Siegel.

I liked the story very much. It was written by a friend of mine, who had taken it from a partially true story. The real story didn't result in homicide, but it had some of the chaos that the script had. It was a small film that I could have shot in Monterey, which is my home. It didn't require a tremendous number of people, and we made the film for about $700,000. It was just an ideal little project. The only downside was it wasn't an action-adventure film in the true sense of the word. But it was a film that I thought could be fun. A lot of people were jolted by it when it came out. John Cassavetes said that the only thing wrong with the film was that it didn't have Hitchcock's name on it.

I don't know if I'd do it the same now, or if I'd do things differently. I suppose I wouldn't do it as well. It was a moment in life and my thoughts at that time. I'm sure I'd do it differently now. I'd have a little more to spend on it and I'd have a little bit more time. I made the film in five weeks, and that was quick. But I had brilliant actresses in Jessica Walter and Donna Mills, who hadn't done anything much but soap operas. But Donna went on to do tremendously well in television. John Larch was in it, and I even featured Don Siegel in a small part.

The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976)

Clint Eastwood; Chief Dan George; Sandra Locke; Bill McKinney; John Vernon; Paula Trueman; Sam Bottoms; Geraldine Keams; Woodraw Parfrey; Joyce Jameson; Sheb Wooley; Royal Dano; Matt Clark; Will Sampson.

I have fond remembrances of *Josey Wales* because it was a real odd circumstance the way the picture came about. It was submitted as a blind submission by the author. I had no idea who he was. A publishing company in Arkansas

sent it to me. The guy had told me they'd only printed up seventy-five copies of his novel and that was it. He was sending them to different actors. I understood he sent one to Robert Mitchum and a bunch of other people, as I found out later. But the cover was so bad that I never really looked at it.

I threw it on my desk, and one day my associate at the time, Robert Daley, picked it up and took it with him to a restaurant and read it at dinner. He said he couldn't put it down. The next morning we had a meeting and he told me about reading this book. So, I went ahead and read it, and I liked it very much, too. So, then we put a deal together and we did a screenplay. Philip Kaufman came in and wrote another draft and made some very nice improvements to it. Then we went ahead and made the picture.

That's one of the films that people seem to refer to all the time. Because of television exposure, kids from one to ninety come up to me all the time and say how much they liked that particular film. People like Orson Welles were very big fans of that particular film. He used to talk about it extensively on the interview shows. He thought it was in the Howard Hawks tradition. Orson was a big fan of Hawks in the early years. It seems to have a nice message about it, a nice anti-war message to be telling at that particular time in history.

Logistically it was a little more extensive than some of my earlier films. I did my first film in five weeks and my second film in five, and the third film was four-and-a-half weeks. On this one I was shooting in Arizona, Utah, and northern California. We moved around quite a bit, so it took us eight or nine weeks.

He's always done exactly what he's wanted to do, because he has a vision and as an artist that kind of makes him unique. He's never sold out.

Alison Eastwood—Actress

Acting and Directing

Approaching a film as a director and approaching it as an actor are quite different. As a director, you usually approach a film as you would like to see it in its entirety. And as an actor, you're thinking, well, how does the character relate? Is this a character that I find appealing? Is this a character I'd like to see? They really are different. I directed films that I haven't acted in because there was no role for me in them. When that happens, I can just stay in the directorial department. But if I'm looking at a project where there might be a role in it for me, then I start thinking about how I am going to do it.

Diane Keaton wrote an article in the *New York Times* on directing and acting and the relationship when she was doing both. And I think it was one of

the more intelligent articles about the problem and how to approach it. She expressed a lot of things that I have never expressed in the past but feel very akin to—one was that sometimes directors talk too much because they're trying to settle their own nervousness, and it drives the actors nuts. I like to see what the actors are going to bring to the film. I like to see what creative thing he or she is going to bring to the role. Then if something isn't going well, you make suggestions about tempo and what have you. It can be as intellectual or pseudo-intellectual as the actor wants to make it. Obviously, you kind of have to use your own judgment on that. With some of them, it can be as simple as, "Very good—but just talk faster." Or it could be something where you say that you'd like a little more rhythm to it, or a little more this-and-that. Or maybe you tell them to take a little pause here and there or accentuate something. You know, directing is kind of an editing medium. You set up shots, and then a director can make an actor look better or worse just by making poor choices in the editing. You take on a lot of responsibility, and an actor is putting a lot in the director's hand every time they suit up.

I can't make an objective judgment of whether I've improved or not improved over the years. You look back on some of the earlier things you've done—you may try something today and completely mess it up. You just don't have the same take on it as you did at that time, because at that time you were in a different spot in your career or a different spot in life. Your feelings were different about things. Now, you're looking back. You know more, but maybe you know enough to not approach it with the same bravado. There are a lot of different things that can make or break a project.

Sudden Impact (1983)

Clint Eastwood; Sandra Locke; Pat Hingle; Bradford Dillman; Paul Drake; Audrie J. Neenan; Jack Thibeau; Michael Currie; Albert Popwell.

I hadn't directed a *Dirty Harry* film in the past, and it was for me a kind of a whimsical thing. I thought I'd do one before I hung that series up. It was based on an idea that wasn't intended to be a *Dirty Harry* picture. It wasn't even a script, just a little synopsis. So, we put together a screenplay and I said, let's do it.

I thought the first *Dirty Harry* was a terrific film, and it was always going to be hard to follow that. Sequels normally don't come up to the original. *Sudden Impact* did very well, but usually it's very hard. But it was almost like

saying, I'm the only one who hasn't directed a *Dirty Harry* movie, so might as well do one. I haven't seen it in so long, I can't tell you if it was as good as the others. It did have the most famous line of all the *Dirty Harry* films, if that counts for anything.

I'm sure that Billy Wilder doesn't sit there and wonder which film of his was best—*Double Indemnity* or *Sunset Boulevard* or *Some Like It Hot*. As a director, you may have one that came out well but wasn't the most fun to shoot. It's very, very, very hard to be objective. All my old films are in the past now, and I'm living in the present and the future. I've directed one *Dirty Harry*, and I think that's fine.

I don't know about seeing Harry Callahan on the screen again. He certainly would be a more mature man now. I suppose somebody could come up with an interesting take on all that. But I think everything should be left in its place. I've done some films that have been successful over the years, and I haven't done sequels to them. I could have done a sequel to *Unforgiven* or *In the Line of Fire*. As you get a larger body of work, sequels become less appealing.

Bird (1988)

Forest Whitaker; Diane Venora; Michael Zelniker; Samuel E. Wright; Keith David; Michael McGuire; James Handy; Damon Whitaker; Morgan Nagler.

My formative years, if I may use that phrase, were probably mostly in the 1940s. I grew up listening to jazz. Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie were the first jazz musicians I ever saw. There were also traditional jazz and Dixieland bands in the San Francisco area where I lived. But as far as big-band jazz and be-bop and stuff—that was coming around in the early 40s. The first one I ever saw was Dizzy Gillespie when he came with a big sixteen-piece band, and I liked that very much.

Then I saw Charlie Parker and Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins and a lot of the players of that day at various concerts when I was a kid. I was very influenced by Charlie Parker. Whenever he was playing somewhere on the West Coast, I'd try to get a chance to sit down and watch him and listen. He had been gone for some years, and all of a sudden, here's this script, and it was pretty good. I knew nothing about him personally, other than just what I used to read in *Metronome* or *Downbeat*. I just knew where he came from musically. I didn't know anything about his personal life. The script was based on Mrs. Parker's relationship with him—it was a good story.

I don't know what it is, but you find a lot of people who are talented are self-destructive. It's not only people in the jazz world. You find a lot of it in the country-western field over the years. Hank Williams and Red Foley and a lot of these people sort of self-destructed along the way. There's something about being the fastest or the best gun in town that's hard to live up to all the time. It makes for a very pressured existence. It's happened to a lot of actors over the years, who did really fine work at one point and then self-destructed and destroyed themselves through indulgence in alcohol, drugs, or food.

There's no way to transmit the feeling of first seeing Charlie Parker, because I was trying to give that feeling of what it was to see a guy who played with that kind of confidence. I was listening to one of his records the other night, one of the concert records where it wasn't really organized or under time restriction. There was no way to express the kind of confidence that he showed when he came out to play. It was just sort of a person who marched to his own drummer. There was no hesitancy. He was a guy who really knew what he could do and really knew what he wanted to say. A lot of jazz musicians are like that. The nature of the business is like that, because jazz is not so much a commercial art form. It's never been mainstream, as far as the box office goes. Jazz musicians play basically because they like the music, and they play for their own gratification. Once in a while you get some people who make it commercially, and they make a good living from it. But by and large a lot of the earlier pioneers were just into the music. Nothing else mattered.

The film won an Oscar for sound. It probably deserved it as much as any other picture for that category. Where I got the most reward was the technical aspect of lifting Charlie Parker out and rerecording into stereo using his solos. We took a lot of his stuff that was just solos, nobody else playing. We built the whole music score to it. Buddy Newhouse and Bobby Fernandez did that here at the studio [Warner Bros.]. They do it a lot now. It's been done with Hank Williams and with Nat and Natalie Cole. It was a little more difficult when we did it, because they had to write chord patterns that fit the old chord patterns. It had to be the same so it didn't clutter it up. It was an interesting project for that reason, and very different from doing a conventional movie.

When you watch other directors' movies you can usually tell what they like in music. You can always tell what music Woody Allen likes in movies. You can always tell what Paul Mazursky likes in music, just by the scores that they use on a recurring basis. I guess you can tell in my case, too. I've used classical scores and I've used jazz scores and pop scores and country scores. I've enjoyed them all for one reason or another. But jazz, of course, takes a high spot on my list.

If it's a dramatic movie, I prefer not to be conscious of the music. But sometimes you are, because the score overrides the drama. Sometimes you get a movie that's a little out of sync, where the drama isn't really quite that good but they put a huge score to try to cover up for that. Or sometimes you have a drama that's real good and they put in a lesser score. It's a hard balance to find. Normally, I would like a little less than more, because the score can get in the way if it's too bombastic and it's out there just jumping all over the place. It usually shows that there's some sort of lack of confidence in the rest of the movie somewhere.

Bringing Them in on Budget

As far as bringing films in on budget and on time: It's a terrible reputation to have, because nobody really gives a damn. I've found that nobody really cares about all that. They care about the final result. If a picture costs three times what it was budgeted for and it's a flop, nobody knows about it. It just dies out. If it's a hit then that's all anybody thinks about. They don't think whether it's a hit and it's in the black yet—just the fact that it makes headlines in the trades for a few days or a few weeks. In my case, I guess I was brought up to have respect for the financier's money. I figure if somebody is dumb enough to finance my films, I'll at least try to bring it in for what I said I would. That's really no big feat—you should be able to do that.

Once I start the film I don't think about the budget. I just do what it takes to make the film. Sometimes it comes in under budget because, a lot of times, an assistant director will budget four days for a sequence that I know I can do in two, or even one. But rather than tell them I can do it in one day, I'll selfishly tell them to leave it that way, and if I do it in less, great. If I go over a half-day, beyond what I thought I could do it in, and I'm still under, that's all the better. It's just a balancing act. Like if it's summertime and you need all the light you can use because it's a picture that's outdoors, then sometimes the days will be longer. Or if you want sunset shots or sunrise shots, you may have to make the days longer. But basically I try to keep to an eight-hour day. You have to portion out the schedule for what it is.

Directing Actors

I only can relate to other actors in the way that I feel about things when I'm relating to other directors. If I work on a character, I prefer to bring the character in, as I know it. I prefer showing what I can do before the director critiques my performance. Once in a while, you get a director who wants to

talk about it forever. Pretty soon, you're wondering if he or she will go on forever. I'll just kind of tune them out. Most of the time the director is trying to talk himself into the whole project to begin with, so sometimes he'll lean on the actor and bore him to death. The director should give the actor a chance to show what he can do and then comment about it, but keep it sparse and don't overwork it. I worked on a picture once where the director came up and started asking the actor what he thought about things. On the first day, one actor went right to the bar and started drinking. His security went right down the tubes. You just can't do that.

I love suggestions from actors. I think that most actors, especially very, very good actors, have great ideas and good suggestions. Sometimes they don't fit with the overall. And if they don't, then you explain why that doesn't work in the overall and the way things have to be cut. I do believe in explaining to actors what the scene's going to look like. I don't try to keep it hidden from them. But yes, actors have great suggestions. I love to have anybody show up with suggestions. Normally, good performers have ideas and visualizations that will enhance the project.

> *In terms of making films, he's very efficient. Very knowledgeable and just quick and easygoing. Very easygoing.*
>
> *Morgan Freeman—Actor*

Unforgiven (1992)

Clint Eastwood; Gene Hackman; Morgan Freeman; Richard Harris; Jaimz Woolvett; Saul Rubinek; Frances Fisher; Anna Levine; David Mucci; Rob Campbell.

Unforgiven was written around 1978 or 1979 and was submitted to me around 1980, I think. I had a reader who was working for me who just couldn't stand it. It was called *The William Munny Killings,* and she didn't like it at all. She didn't understand the message in it. So, she wrote this scathing review of it, and I read it and figured there was no reason to look at it. So it bounced around for a few years. Later on, a reader here on the Warner Bros. lot asked me if I had ever used David [Webb] Peoples as a writer. It turned out I had not. Anyway, this reader said I should read this script that Webb wrote because he thought I might like it. I thought the title was kind of familiar. So, I read it and I really liked it, but another director had optioned it.

I called the agent and asked if David Peoples was available to do some

writing, because I read *The William Munny Killings* script and liked it. Then the agent tells me that the option on that script was up a week ago and the director didn't renew it. So, I bought it and set it aside—that was in the early 1980s. I thought it would be better if I was a little bit older. So, I put it aside for the future. Then, a decade later, I thought maybe it was time to revisit that script. So, I took it out and reread it and said, I think I'll do this next.

I don't think you'd call it an anti-western. I think you'd just call it a myth-breaking western. It destroyed some of the myths that had built up about the West. The writer even had a journalist who was trying to build the myth of the West, and destroying it all at the same time. I thought it was all part of what made the script so brilliant. And the villain, played by Gene Hackman, was not a villain, which was what I liked about it. The villain is not a villain in his own eyes. The villain wasn't just a guy who didn't shave and was all gnarly. He was a guy who actually thought he was right. He had a certain way of enforcing gun control. He had his own ideas as to how law enforcement should participate in this particular territory. Some lawmen were not so compatible with the people they were supposed to protect, but this guy managed to make it work. Then he gradually becomes a villain as he becomes oppressive to everyone else around him. It was a great role. In fact, when I read the script the first time, I didn't know who was going to be the hero of the piece. And I thought maybe Gene Hackman's character was gonna be the main hero, because it starts out with him, and then you gradually see it unfold. The script was very, very well constructed.

I started rewriting it. I talked to David Peoples and told him I wanted to do this and that and I was going to write a couple of scenes and change a few things. But the more I fiddled with it the more I realized how great the original script was. I realized that everything I was disassembling were a lot of the blocks that were holding it together. I finally called him up one night and told him to forget about all the rewrite stuff we were talking about. I went back to his script and made the film just the way it was written. I did change the title because I never did like the original. And that's basically how it happened. And I also figured if it was my last western. I don't know if it will be my last, but it is kind of a perfect one to be a last one as far as I'm concerned. That it was the perfect story.

Morgan Freeman is a terrific actor and he always has liked westerns and wanted to be in a western. He loves horses and horseback riding, so he was onboard right away. Gene Hackman was a little hesitant because he was in a period in his life where he didn't want to do anything violent. I called him

and told him what I felt about the statement we could make about violence in the picture, and then he came aboard. When I called Richard Harris, he was at his home down in the Bahamas and he was watching *The High Plains Drifter* on television just when I called. The housekeeper told him I was on the phone. He didn't believe it.

The Bridges of Madison County (1995)

Clint Eastwood; Meryl Streep; Annie Corley; Victor Slezak; Jim Haynie; Sarah Kathryn Schmitt; Christopher Kroon; Phyllis Lyons; Debra Monk.

Kathleen Kennedy and Steven Spielberg were the ones who had optioned the book. They actually had a couple of screenplays done before I even came on the scene, and they had put it together here at Warner Bros. When the head of Warner Bros. called me and asked if I'd like to do it, I really wasn't familiar with the project, but I knew the book was a big hit. It turned out that producer Lili Zanuck had given me the book about a week before that because she saw me in it. I had just finished reading it when they called. So I said I was interested, but it needs this and it needs that. Then they gave me the screenplays to read—three or four of them, as I recall. They were all off in different directions, with some of them changing the story line completely.

Spielberg and I rewrote it. He was back East in the Hamptons for the summer, and I was up in northern California in Mount Shasta, so we wrote it and sent it back and forth by fax machine. I'd fax them to him, and he would make some changes and dictate some pages of other scenes and send them back. We did this for about a week, and finally we put the screenplay together. Then Richard LaGravenese, who had done the script that we had been working from, asked if he could take one more pass through it. He did, and that's how it wound up.

I never felt there was a problem in trying to match the film up to the book, because I didn't really *want* to match up to the book. I thought the book was interesting—it was a very good story, and the guy had written a very successful book. There was nobody dying in it of any terminal illness or any of the usual soap-opera things. And I liked the way the romance came about. But the way the book was constructed was from the man's point of view. I thought it was more or less the woman's story, and we sort approached it that way. It was a question of just trimming stuff down from the book that I thought was somewhat hammy and might not translate to the screen very well.

We just let her tell her story as opposed to the book, which starts out in Washington. Then you travel with him in a pickup truck across the country, with cases of beer in the back and all that sort of thing. He finally comes across this farm and the farmer's wife. That didn't seem like it would work for a movie, you know. We wanted to just keep it simple with her story.

There were a couple of other people associated with the film before me. They were looking for a European actress. But I thought that Meryl Streep was at the right stage in life to be playing that role. I thought that she might like it when she saw the screenplay, so I called her up. I had met her socially a few times, but didn't know her very well. I got her phone number from a friend of mine, and I called her up and told her I wasn't too nuts about the book. I asked her to read the screenplay and see what she thought. She called me back the next day and said she thought the screenplay was superior and would like to do it. So, we shook hands over the phone, and I told her she'd be hearing from me.

Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil (1997)

John Cusack; Kevin Spacey; Jack Thompson; Irma P. Hall; Jude Law; Alison Eastwood; Paul Hipp; Lady Chablis; Dorothy Loudon; Anne Haney; Kim Hunter; Geoffrey Lewis; Richard Herd; Leon Rippy; Bob Gunton.

Garden of Good and Evil had an atmosphere about it—a story of a small incident in a town with interesting characters. It's very hard to tell a story in two hours about all those characters as written in that book. But we did the best we could.

There were originally three or four trials, and we made one trial out of it. John Lee Hancock did a very good job of putting the script together. It was just an unusual piece of material, set in an unusual place. Go down there, and you kind of get a feeling of how unusual it really is. It's like a whole city of people marching to a different drummer.

I subscribe to Bill Goldman's theory. He's a well-known screenwriter who says, "Nobody knows nothing." He's right—when it comes to movies and Hollywood and making movies, whether they're made in L.A., New York, Europe, or wherever. Nobody knows anything about whether a film is going to make money or not. All you can do is just think in terms of making the very best film you can. I don't think about all that other stuff. In fact, it's not my job to think about all that. My job is to present the story the best I can.

When you have a book that's a tremendous best-seller, like *Midnight* was, you're dealing with book readers. Unfortunately, the vast majority of movie-

goers doesn't read books and could care less. If you can get all the people that read the book to see the movie, you're still talking about a very small audience, compared to the audience of what you'd call a hit motion picture. All I know is that I enjoyed making it. The studio owned it and they wanted somebody to do it. I liked it and wanted to take a crack at it. Reviewers, on the other hand, are looking at it from different angle. They get preconceived ideas if they read the book and decide they wish you had accentuated this character more than that character. But you can't worry about that battle. Reviewers have a right to their opinions, too.

He is so organized and he is such a budget-conscious director. There are no frills. He doesn't believe in frills. He has taken all of the b.s. out of the whole procedure, but everybody has a good time.

Richard D. Zanuck—Producer

True Crime (1999)

Clint Eastwood; Isaiah Washington; Denis Leary; Lisa Gay Hamilton; James Woods; Penny Bae Bridges; Frances Fisher; Bernard Hill; Michael Jeter.

Richard and Lili Zanuck had the project and sent it to me. I read it and thought it was a very interesting story.

The character that I play, Steve Everett, is a guy who's on the road to self-destruction. This job he's got is his last shot. He's been slowly demoted through the ranks of journalism to where he's now working, a smaller newspaper in a small city. His life is all screwed up. He destroyed his marriage and he's jeopardizing his relationship with his daughter. He believes a man on death row is innocent, so he goes off on this tangent. It's really a story about obsession, and his values are in the wrong place. Not that there's anything *not* noble about trying to save somebody falsely accused, but it's the fact that his priorities and his personal life are really screwed up. That gives you another obstacle for the character to overcome, rather than just be the normal sort of working guy who gets interested in a case.

Instead of saying "cut" at the end of a take, he would say, "That's enough of that shit." After your own close-up, it's hilarious, but when I saw him doing it to himself, it really made me laugh.

Laura Dern—Actress

Space Cowboys (2000)

Clint Eastwood; Tommy Lee Jones; Donald Sutherland; James Garner; James Cromwell; Marcia Gay Harden; William Devane; Blair Brown.

Those four guys were not astronauts, were not pilots. The Chuck Yaeger–type guys, the guys who did all that pioneering, going to the edge of space with the X-1 and X-2 rocket planes that they used to drop off of the bottom of a B-50. This is about guys from that generation who didn't get to go into the astronaut program because then it was turned over to NASA. And then they sent up monkeys first, and then they sent up younger people. This is the story of a guy who originally designed the system for the satellite that's up there. It's a communication satellite and it's decaying and they want him to teach people to fix it. He tells them that he won't do that, but that he'll go up to fix it himself. He takes these four guys that were all in part of the X-1 and X-2 program, and they all go up on the shuttle to fix this satellite. Then they get into all kinds of intrigue.

Note: At this point Eastwood's people indicate he is late for a dental appointment and we should plan on ending the interview.

Parting Thoughts

I suppose you'd have to say one of the high points for me was the gratification of *Unforgiven* getting the Oscar for Best Picture in 1993, not only from the Academy, but from other awards organizations as well. That was an obvious high point. But I suppose there's been a ton of them along the way. Just getting to do pictures is a high point for me.

I tell you, my life is fun and I've been very, very lucky. And I've been able to enjoy almost six decades of making films. In recent decades, I've been able to do pretty much the kind of film that I wanted to do, and I consider myself very lucky. I think back to many of the actors who came before me from the great era of motion pictures of the Forties. They were pretty much all contract players, and most every one of them had to do what was there. They had to do a lot of films every year for the studios. Once in a while, an actor would come along and break out and do something different, something they wanted to do. But most of the time, it was kind of a crapshoot. Clark Gable, Humphrey Bogart, all those people—they had to do what the studio said.

Maybe it's time for me to hang it up. On the other hand, maybe there are

a couple more things to do out there. I've got a few other projects, and I intend to address them here in the future. But who knows how long a person wants to do it. I think staying active in life is what keeps a person lively. I think it's very, very important to stay active. You can't just sit back and do nothing. I had relatives who couldn't wait to retire. Well, I suppose that's fun, too. But I wouldn't want to. I'd want to do that for just one day and then do something else the next day.

Clint Eastwood Filmography

Play Misty for Me (1971)
High Plains Drifter (1972)
Breezy (1973)
The Eiger Sanction (1975)
The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976)
The Gauntlet (1977)
Bronco Billy (1980)
Firefox (1982)
Honkytonk Man (1982)
Sudden Impact (1983)
Pale Rider (1985)
Amazing Stories (TV series, episode "Vanessa and the Garden," 1985)
Heartbreak Ridge (1986)
Bird (1988)
White Hunter, Black Heart (1990)
The Rookie (1990)
Unforgiven (1992)
A Perfect World (1993)
The Bridges of Madison County (1995)
Absolute Power (1997)
Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil (1997)
True Crime (1999)
Space Cowboys (2000)

Blood Work (2000)
Mystic River (2003)

Awards and Nominations

Academy Awards, USA
Irving G. Thalberg Memorial Award, 1995
Unforgiven, Best Director, 1993
Unforgiven, Best Picture, 1993

Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films
Space Cowboys, Best Director, Saturn Award (nominated), 2001

British Academy Awards
Unforgiven, Best Direction (nominated), 1993
Unforgiven, Best Film (nominated), 1993

Cannes Film Festival
White Hunter, Black Heart, Golden Palm (nominated), 1990
Bird, Golden Palm (nominated), 1988
Pale Rider, Golden Palm (nominated), 1985

Cesar Awards
Honorary Award, 1998
Bridges of Madison County, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1996
Bird, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1989

Directors Guild of America
Unforgiven, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (shared with David Valdes, Bob Gray, Scott Maitland, Bill Bannerman, and Jeffery Wetzel), 1993

FilmFest Hamburg
Douglas Sirk Award, 1995

Film Society of Lincoln Center
Gala Tribute, 1996

Golden Globe Awards
Unforgiven, Best Director—Motion Picture, 1993
Bird, Best Director—Motion Picture, 1989
Cecile B. DeMille Award, 1988

Hasty Pudding Theatricals
Man of the Year, 1991

Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards
Unforgiven, Best Director, 1992

National Board of Review Awards
Career Achievement Award, 1999

National Society of Film Critics Awards
Unforgiven, Best Director, 1993

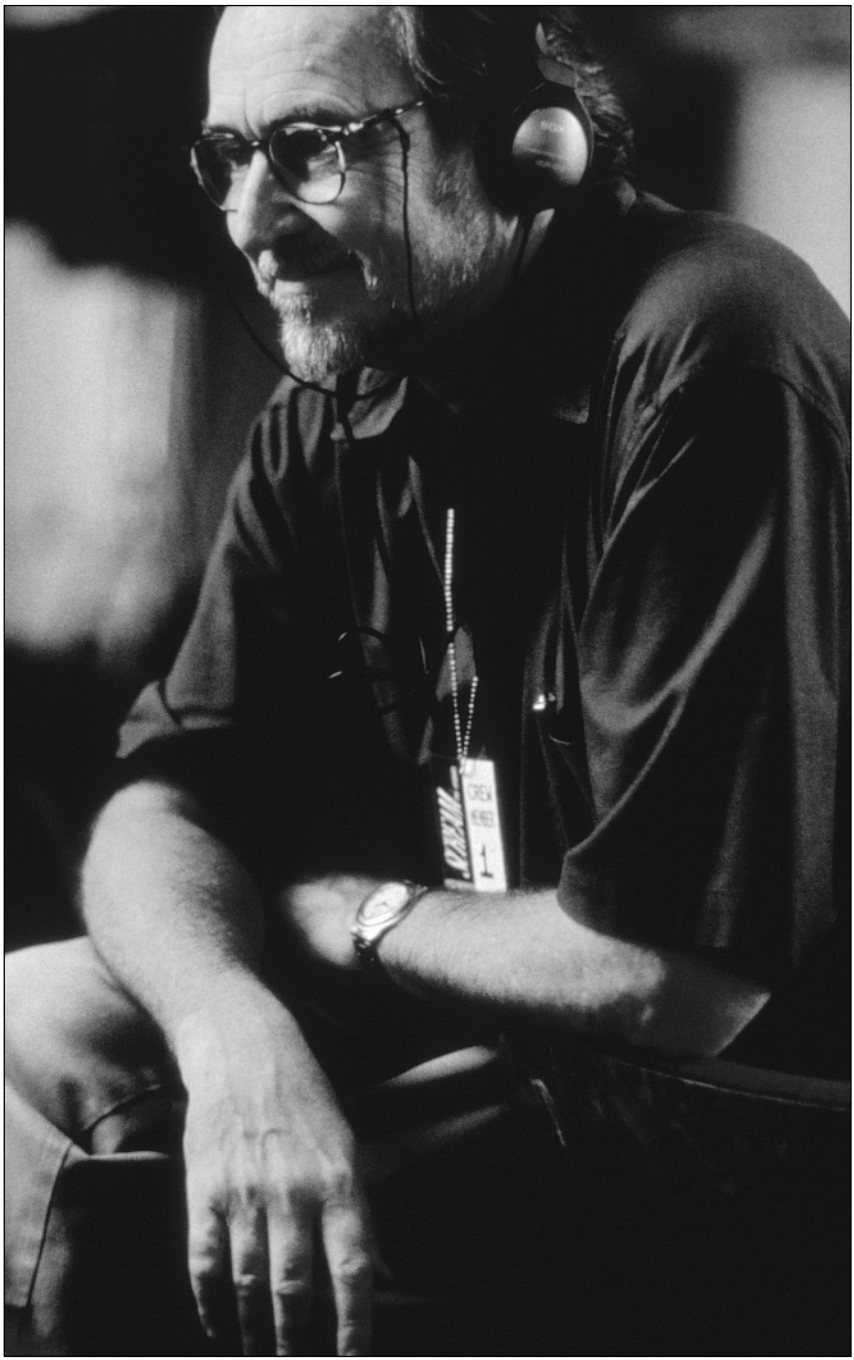
PGA Golden Laurel Awards
Lifetime Achievement Award for Motion Pictures, 1998

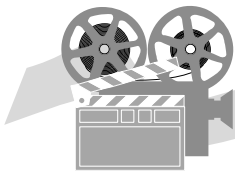
San Francisco International Film Festival
Akira Kurosawa Award, 2001

ShoWest Convention Awards
Director of the Year, 1993

Society of Motion Picture and Television Art Directors
Contribution to Cinematic Imagery Award, 2001

Venice Film Festival
Career Golden Lion Award, 2000





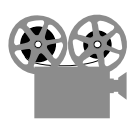
5

The Films of Wes Craven

Wes Craven was born on August 2, 1939, and grew up in Cleveland, Ohio. Although he endured trying circumstances as a child, he managed to earn a master's degree in writing and philosophy from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, as well as carve for himself a distinguished career in the motion-picture industry. Craven's career has been marked by creative and commercial milestones since 1972, when he directed his first feature film, *Last House on the Left*. Ever since then, he has been challenging audiences with his bold visions.

Craven has repeatedly demonstrated that he is a filmmaker with heart, guts, humor, and an unbridled imagination. Such films as *The Serpent and the Rainbow, Swamp Thing, Nightmare on Elm Street, Vampire in Brooklyn, Scream* and its two sequels, and *Music of the Heart* have placed Wes Craven on the A-list of Hollywood directors.

Craven's first film, *Last House on the Left*, has been called repugnant and sadistic and was billed by one reviewer as "the most disgusting movie I have even seen"—all things that add up to a good horror film, which Craven does better than just about anyone else.



The Conversation

When you're a kid, you don't have anything to compare your experiences to. Everything seemed very normal to me, growing up in Cleveland. I suppose the most significant single event was that very early in my life, my father died,

and before that, he left the family. So, there was that whole uproar of Dad leaving, and I have vague memories of the arguments before. Then, about a year after he left, he had a heart attack at work and died and was buried on my fourth birthday. Those early five years had a lot of disruptions for me.

Then we had to move, and thereafter it was a series of different houses, different locations, because of the fact that my mother's income went down considerably, and she was working, and so forth. But Cleveland was a nice town to grow up in when you're a kid. It has a lot of great parks and has the lake. There was always a sense of water and a sense of trees. It's still like that. I still work into all my films that sense of arboreal mystery and the subconsciousness of water. I like that.

I've had this one peculiarity to my upbringing that I probably should mention. While my parents were still married, and I think during the time of the troubles in their marriage, they were invited to join a church and converted to Fundamentalist Christianity in a Baptist church. It's very hard to mention it in sort of the general milieu of American thought, without people thinking of it as something odd or extreme. But going back to what I said about everything seeming normal if you had nothing to compare it to—that was our church. It was very much a second family.

The women formed a Bible study group that would meet before church. They called themselves The Greeners, based on the idea of green souls in the fields. Those women stayed friends for the rest of their lives. They're still friends. There was a remarkable sense of stability and shelter, and all of our activities were built around that church. We went there many times a week for prayer meetings and other things, and of course all day Sundays. I attended church camps and all sorts of youth groups and everything else connected with the church. So, that was the positive side of it.

The negative side, as far as becoming a filmmaker, is that they did not believe in movies. With the exception of Walt Disney films, Hollywood and its product were considered to be the work of the devil, literally. So, we simply did not go to movies. I discovered the library very quickly and really grew up reading novels and stories.

A woman named Dorothy Dalton was one of my mother's closest friends. When my father died, Dorothy invited me into their household during the day, until my mother came back from work at night. So, for many years they became my second family, and Eddie Dalton was like a surrogate father to me. One of Eddie's hobbies was 8mm photography. He would take movies of everything. We would always go to their house on Saturday evenings and

watch whatever movies he had taken. He would also rent movies from the local camera shop, which was a custom in those days. We would see everything from Woody Woodpecker cartoons to the world's most amazing events. They were silent films, and everybody would talk and comment and laugh and what not. I remember that I was completely enthralled by film.

Cut to many, many years later, when I was teaching college. What was going on in film was a big revolution with the new cinema of Europe, with Truffaut and Fellini and all those guys making these wonderful, magical films. And there were also a lot of short films being made that were showing on the college campus where I was teaching. So, once again I was enthralled and became more and more excited about the idea of making little movies. I borrowed a silent 16mm camera and started making home movies around campus. Students who were more aware than me of how films were made came to me and suggested we start a film club. They said they had a couple of movies they wanted to shoot. They had written a *Mission Impossible* takeoff. I became sort of their advisor-cameraman, with my little camera.

So, there we were, making a movie in the town of Potsdam, New York, where I was teaching college, and going around making moving shots in shopping carts and things like that. We made it and spliced it together, using a projector as an editing machine. We knew nothing about the technical side of film, really. We made our splices with either glue or scotch tape. Made a soundtrack on a quarter-inch tape on a reel-to-reel and would keep it in sync with a rheostat. We showed it around campus and it made a lot of money. We made the cost of our film, which I think was $300, back—about ten times. We had a huge party, and we financed some more films. And at the end of that year, my department chair came to me and scolded me because I wasn't working toward my Ph.D. and had not published any papers. He said I was running around with that stupid camera, acting like an idiot. He suggested it was time I became a serious humanities professor. So, I quit and told him I was going to go to New York City and learn how to make movies.

I took the vacation pay I had coming and went to New York. There was a magazine I used to read all the time called *Evergreen Review*, which was published by Grove Press. They wrote a lot of stuff about cinema vérité and documentaries. They mentioned D. A. Pennebaker, who had made a documentary called *Monterey Pop*. So, I looked them up in New York but didn't get a job. The building they were in, which was at 56 West 45th Street, was full of documentary filmmakers. I got to know all of those people informally, but none of them gave me a job.

At the end of the summer I phoned my wife and told her that I still didn't have a job. So I went back up to Potsdam with my tail between my legs, but couldn't get back into the college. So, I taught a year of high school in a farming community. And I thought to myself, here you are—you were teaching college for five years, and you went off for this mad dream. I was writing things that weren't getting published and running around trying to get into films, and I was getting close to turning thirty at the time.

By the end of that year I decided I either had to get another teaching job or give my dream another try. I decided to give the dream another try. But I still didn't get a job. Finally, an ex-student of mine from my college days, Steve Chapin, had a brother by the name of Harry Chapin—not the folk singer, but a film editor. Harry was making industrials for IBM in New York City, and Steve suggested I look him up. Harry couldn't give me a job but offered to let me sit with him and learn the basics of editing on a Steenbeck film editing system. So, I sat with Harry in this place called Roland Time Film Management, which was managing the postproduction of documentaries made for Time Life television series. Eventually, I got a job there as a messenger, and within ten months I was offered a job as assistant manager of the place. We were working on a lot of interesting projects. Roland finally fired me because I got a print from a lab that I had to present to an important screenwriter. I spliced it together, and it was *backwards*, so I was fired. Suddenly, I was driving a cab in New York.

I eventually got a job syncing up dailies re-shoot on a film called *Together*, which was being done by Sean Cunningham and a photographer-editor-writer named Roger Murphy. As a result of that, Sean and I became best friends. Sean was my age and had two kids who actually had the same names as my kids. Anyway, that film was made for $70,000 and made about $3 million. The people who had financed it offered Sean the opportunity to make a scary movie. Sean knew I wanted to be a director, so he suggested I write something scary, and that is how I ended up writing *Last House on the Left.*

Last House on the Left (1972)

Sandra Cassel; Lucy Grantham; David Hess; Fred J. Lincoln; Jeramie Rain; Marc Sheffler; Gaylord St. James; Cynthia Carr.

We made the movie and thought it would run in a few theaters and never be heard from again. Instead, it went on and played and played and played and

played. Suddenly we were very successful filmmakers and complete social pariahs amongst all of our friends, because we had made this unforgivably cynical and violent horror film. But hey, I was in the film business.

The Hills Have Eyes (1978)

Susan Lanier; Robert Houston; Martin Speer; Dee Wallace-Stone; Russ Grieve; John Steadman; James Whitworth; Virginia Vincent; Lance Gordon.

Deadly Blessing (1981)

Maren Jensen; Sharon Stone; Susan Buckner; Jeff East; Colleen Riley; Douglas Barr; Lisa Hartman; Lois Nettleton; Ernest Borgnine.

To keep paying the bills I had become an editor. At one point, another friend of mine, Peter Locke, who owns one-half of the Cushner-Locke Company, suggested that I should make yet another *Last House on the Left*, which Sean and I had both resisted.

At that time Peter Locke was married to Liz Torres, who was doing a Vegas act. Peter told me that the desert was wide open, we didn't need permits to shoot out there, and suggested I write something we could shoot in the desert. So, I wrote this sort of apocalyptic story of a family in 1984, which was at that time so far in the future we thought everything in the United States would have collapsed. They were trying to sneak across the desert into California, because you had to have a passport to go from state to state. The economy had collapsed and people weren't allowed into California. That was the remaining golden state. So, they decided to cut across the desert and they encountered this mutant group of feral people.

The Hills Have Eyes was interesting to me because it was an important film in that it brought me from the East Coast to the West Coast. In the course of making it, I began to meet people who were plugged into the Hollywood system. It also was a much larger budget, about $325,000, which bought us more shooting days and a larger crew, although I think our whole crew was probably seventeen people at that time. It also got me a certain amount of critical acclaim, because it was seen as a kind of social commentary.

Max Keller, a producer, saw it and hired me to direct my first television thing, which was called *A Stranger in the House*, with Linda Blair and Carol Lawrence. That got me into the Directors Guild. Max liked my work on that so much that he offered me a rewrite on a movie that I eventually directed called *Deadly Blessing*. *Deadly Blessing* had a budget of several million, which was astronomical to me. We shot that down in Waxahatchie, Texas.

It was interesting working with name stars for the first time. Peter Guber and Jon Peters were producing. One day they brought a young model and actress to see me who had been in a silent role in a Woody Allen picture. That actress was Sharon Stone. We put her in the picture—it was her first speaking role.

Swamp Thing (1982)

Louis Jourdan; Adrienne Barbeau; Ray Wise; David Hess; Nicholas Worth; Don Knight; Al Ruban; Dick Durock.

The plot for *Swamp Thing* was based on a very popular comic book. It was one that I wasn't particularly familiar with, because comic books were another thing that was forbidden by the church. I read all the *Swamp Thing* comic books and just kind of made an amalgam of a story that was based on the major characters. That's how that came about. It was sort of an adaptation, if you will.

I wasn't satisfied with *Swamp Thing* because it was a film that I think was severely damaged by its lack of funding. It was underbudgeted from the get-go. About halfway through the film, the company that guaranteed the budget came in and were on the set all the time, to the point that the producers literally were weeping. The second half of the film was basically shot in masters, and a lot of what was in the script was thrown out. That film was made under incredible duress.

We were shooting in the swamps and we had everything from alligators to water moccasins. The botanic acid of the water itself ate through the costumes. The *Swamp Thing* special effects costume was literally rotting off the actor. We were working in extreme heat and humidity. The actors were collapsing from heat fatigue. There was a plague of stinging caterpillars hanging in all the trees, and they were falling down our necks all the time. It was one of the most arduous shoots I've ever had. I'm amazed that the film looks as nice as it does. But it was a tough one.

Nightmare on Elm Street (1984)

John Saxon; Ronee Blakley; Heather Langenkamp; Amanda Wyss; Nick Corri; Johnny Depp; Charles Fleischer; Joseph Whipp; Robert Englund.

The history of *Nightmare on Elm Street* is kind of interesting. I read a newspaper article in the *Los Angeles Times* about a recent immigrant to the United States. He was a young man who had complained to his parents about severe nightmares. I think they were from Cambodia. He was assured that the nightmares were not that unusual, but he started staying up and refused to sleep. The family became very concerned and they sought the help of a doctor. The doctor prescribed sleeping pills. The young man apparently did not take them and he kept a coffee pot in his room after awhile to stay awake. No one knew quite what to do.

At one point he was downstairs watching television in the middle of the night and he fell asleep. His family took him up to his bed. An hour later they heard screams and found him thrashing in his bed. But by the time they got to him he was dead. Over the next nine months I found two more articles like that. This phenomenon seemed to occur with this group of young men who had gone through war and relocation camps. So, I wrote about it and thought it was the best thing since sliced bread, and then spent three years trying to get somebody to fund it. I had a wonderful drawer full of letters telling me that it wasn't scary enough.

There was one small studio in New York, run by Bob Shea, called Neon Cinema, which at that time was distributing films like *Reefer Madness* and *Pink Flamingos*. They wanted to make the picture but didn't really have the money to fund it. In the meantime I wasn't working and basically went broke. Both *Swamp Thing* and *Deadly Blessing* had not done that well and I couldn't even get arrested. I had made *The Hills Have Eyes II* and that got me through a little bit, but basically I was flat broke when Bob finally pieced together the money and that film was put into production. The rest is history, and I've been working ever since. But I've never forgotten those two times in my life when I thought I had made it, and, suddenly, you don't have work. How fickle the business can be and how difficult it is to write something that is a breakthrough, because if you have a vision of something that is the next thing, there is no guarantee there'll be another person out there that can recognize that.

On Casting

In the old days it used to be, Who is willing to do it? But you really look for actors you think can wade through all of the veneer of civilization in one way or another, either as victim or as perpetrator. And that takes a lot of sensitivity. It actually does. And it takes a lot of courage. Both to show the vulnerability and to show the kind of hardness that I think is in all of us, one way or the other. In some people—most of us—it's contained. But, there's that Kosovo factor of people that at one moment can be nurturing their children, the next moment slashing each other's throats. That appalling truth that's behind so much of what we'd like to think of as civilization. So, we look for that willingness on the part of an actor to expose that. A lot of people just don't want to bring that out or say they don't have it. Quite often it's the person that's the most gentle or the most civilized. The guy that played in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, this chainsaw-wielding mass killer, was a poet in Austin, Texas.

Thoughts on Directing

Early on, I had somebody tell me that I would never be a good director because I don't scream and I'm not a captain. Actors need a captain screaming and intimidating them, I was told. What I do on the set is basically win their respect by being incredibly prepared, more than I ever was in junior high school or high school, where I was a complete goof-off. Come completely prepared with a shot list that is extraordinarily detailed, and surround myself with people that are extraordinarily competent. But, at the same time, I have an irrepressible sense of humor. Making films has been my way of being with people.

I'm typically a shy person, I think. I started off that way and came from this isolated background. One of the magic things about film for me is that it lets me work with people very intimately. So, a lot of what I do is not conscious, but I'm totally obsessed with the idea that a movie set should be relaxed, loving, and very calm. I think one thing I have is a sense of perspective, both of the importance of what we're doing and of the overall smallness of what we're doing. Somebody once told me a wonderful analogy to life itself. Take the whole history of the planet Earth, three billion plus years, and compare it to a Cleopatra's needle, which is in London now. If you had a quarter on top of that and a postage stamp on top of that, the entire history of the planet, geographically and geologically, would be the length of that ninety-foot-high piece of art. The entire history of life on the planet would be the thickness of the quarter. The entire history of mankind would be the thickness of the postage stamp, and the recorded history would be

the thickness of the ink molecules. I always go back to that when they're screaming at me from the studios. It's not that important, and the other half of it is of absolute importance. If I hear somebody on the set say "It's just a movie," I want to kill them.

Deadly Friend (1986)

Matthew Laborteaux; Kristy Swanson; Michael Sharrett; Anne Twomey; Anne Ramsey; Richard Marcus; Russ Marin.

Deadly Friend was made during the year of hell for me. I discovered, to put it discreetly, that my marriage was no longer anything but a sham. I was supposed to be directing *Beetlejuice,* and about two months into preparation for that, I was yanked from it. I was supposed to direct *Superman IV,* and I had an interview with Christopher Reeve, and he said, "Wes Craven will never direct my film." On top of that, someone who thought that I had copied a script that was so different from *Nightmare on Elm Street* that you can't believe it was suing me for about $30 million. All of that was going on at the time I was directing *Deadly Friend*. So, it was like the year from hell for me. It was also my first big-studio film, and there were about twenty producers on it, and they all had different opinions. So I'm amazed that anything came out of that film.

> *He has good friendships that he's maintained through his work, and he's remained a very steady guy, kind of a lasting memory you bring away from the pictures you make with him.*
>
> *Bill Pullman—Actor*

The Serpent and the Rainbow (1988)

Bill Pullman; Cathy Tyson; Zakes Mokae; Paul Winfield; Brent Jennings; Conrad Roberts; Badja Djola; Theresa Merritt.

David Ladd and Rob Cohn brought *The Serpent and the Rainbow* to me. They had seen *Nightmare on Elm Street* and thought that I was a good candidate to direct *Rainbow*. I was fascinated by the subject matter and by the book. But after they saw *Deadly Friend* they brought me into their office and said they hated the film, and if I were going to direct like that again they'd fire me. That was quite typical of my career during those years. But they stuck with

me and we went off and made that after a lot of difficulty. Actually, the financing fell through and it was eventually taken over by Universal. Rob was able to get Universal to pick up the financing and we finally went off to Haiti and made that film.

The Serpent and the Rainbow was a fascinating film in many ways. It's one of the few treatments of voodoo that treats voodoo as a religion and as a factual thing. It was the examination of the origin of zombies, which is an actual phenomenon. For many, many years, people thought they were just a fictional thing. But they actually are the chemical creation of people who have had their brains virtually erased. They've been put into a state of apparent death, which is a medical term for where you appear to be dead and your pulse is so faint that it's not recognizable unless you really, really carefully look for it. Then they're buried and later dug up by the people who poisoned them, and processed further until their brains are virtually erased. And then they're released. So, to the local people who were at the funeral, they think that their loved ones have come back as the living dead. It's quite fascinating.

For me personally it was one of the most fascinating, enjoyable, and terrifying films to make. In the end I think as a film it suffers from many different visions. Some of the producers wanted a love story. Some wanted a religious story, a history of voodoo. The studio wanted a horror film. So, it suffers from that kind of diffusion of purpose, I think. But it remains one of my favorite films.

> *Wes has a very special place in my heart, besides being an amazing director. He's just a really caring and sweet man.*
>
> *Courtney Cox—Actress*

Shocker (1989)

Mitch Pileggi; John Tesh; Heather Langenkamp; Peter Berg; Jessica Craven; Camille Cooper; Richard Brooks; Sam Scarber; Ted Raimi.

With that film we tried to create another franchise character for Universal. Obviously, we didn't succeed, but I think we made a film that was interesting and fascinating. You know, it was kind of the beginning of my exploration of ins and outs of the reality of media itself, with characters that were diving into television sets and onto programs that were in progress and then back out into somebody else's living room.

The special effects were the Achilles tendon of that film. The concept was that after he was electrocuted and had escaped, he would go into a sort of electromagnetic world. That would be an equivalent of Freddy's dream world. For those scenes he needed to be semitransparent and sort of pixilated. We had a special effects guy who I had worked with on *Twilight Zone,* and he had done very well with video special effects. He thought that he had devised a system where the character of Horace Pinker could move through any given scene on video and save ourselves about two-thirds of the cost of doing it on film. But as the film wore on, we were not seeing anything back from our special effects man. Very late in the making of the film he came to us and confessed in tears that the process was not working. In the process of taking the elements back from him, we discovered he had virtually had a nervous breakdown. Our negative was in the trunk of his car, under his bed, and under optical benches throughout town, unlabeled and mixed up. It was a total nightmare.

So, we had to bring in somebody else and we spent the rest of the film doing our effects in the traditional way in every optical house in town. That particular film was a nightmare.

The People Under the Stairs (1992)

Brandon Quintin Adams; Everett McGill; Wendy Robie; A. J. Langer; Ving Rhames; Sean Whalen; Bill Cobbs; Kelly Jo Minter.

That was another plot that came out of the newspapers. It was this incredible story that had happened in Santa Monica, California. After this middle-class couple went off to work, their neighbor looked over and saw their house being broken into by two black guys. They called the police and the police came. When they arrived, the door was open and they went inside with guns drawn. One part of the house was locked from the other side, and so they thought they had these guys trapped. The police burst in with guns drawn and found something like three pale kids who clearly had never been outside, ever, and had no contact with human beings. These very straight people who went off to work every day literally had kept them prisoners.

It was just one of those stories that struck me with such irony—everybody feeling that the black people breaking into the house was the worst thing imaginable, and there you have this middle-class, perfect family with a terri-

ble secret, not of having stolen a television set or something, but the life of their own children. So, it just became *The People Under the Stairs*.

I'm not sure that comic relief intensifies horror at all. I've done it sometimes successfully and sometimes not successfully. I think in *People Under the Stairs* it might have detracted a bit from it. Looking back at it, I think I let it get a little too broad. But that's one of those things that you can't go back and change. It was written much more ferociously than it was acted. And I think, in part, it was just the goodness of the actors and actresses. They didn't quite have the meanness of spirit that would make it completely dark and evil.

More *Nightmare* Films

The return of the *Nightmare* films was based on two things. One, Bob Shea and I had had a series of disagreements that played out in the press. Eventually we decided that we should be grown-ups and put this all behind us. And the second thing was that he wanted me to bring Freddy back. The only way I was willing to do that is if it were a step up, because I thought the films had been stepping down recently. He agreed to that.

I went back and looked at all the previous Freddy films and I couldn't see any pattern, anything that led to anything. Then I had an idea that it would be interesting to make a film about the making of the film and how the film took on a life of its own. Couple that with how important it is to make scary films and what might happen if there were suddenly no scary stories. So, I worked with this idea that Freddy, as himself, encompasses something as a character that is more real than the character itself. So, that was kind of the background to it.

Vampire in Brooklyn (1995)

Eddie Murphy; Angela Bassett; Allen Payne; Kadeem Hardison; Zakes Mokae; Joanna Cassidy; Simbi Khali; Messiri Freeman.

My agent called saying that Eddie Murphy, who had been a big fan apparently, especially of *The Hills Have Eyes,* wanted to make a vampire movie, and would I like to be the director.

I think probably the budget for *Vampire* was one of our largest, but it wasn't huge, by any means. It was, by the studio standards, low budget. So, it was a tight budget to work with, given all the factors of working on the studio lot.

In *Vampire,* Eddie wanted to play a really dark and bad character. He didn't necessarily want to do comedy. The studio very much wanted him to do comedy. I think they sensed that they were just one *Nutty Professor* away from a lot of money. But Eddie both did and didn't want to go that way. So, he kind of played the comedy, but he also played the character quite dark, and not completely insanely funny, and not vulnerable, which is a way that we had suggested to him. But he simply did not want to take that course. So, he played this kind of straight character with funny ancillary characters that would kind of spice up and choke his comic charms, you know.

Eddie Murphy is a very, very complex guy. He used to call me at 3:00 in the morning, because he knew that I was a night owl, and he is, too. And one of the interesting things to realize about a star of that magnitude is that their area of privacy is very constricted. That's the first time I really felt that to that extreme. When he would get into the makeup of some of those secondary characters he played, then he seemed most relaxed. He would sometimes even go off the lot in makeup because he could move through culture, through society, unrecognized and could just be himself.

I heard a report from the *Nutty Professor* set that he once went out in the complete fat-suit get-up, went to a playground, and just played with the children. He was completely and innocently free. It's a very interesting thing when you see somebody like that who, when he's himself, has to move surrounded by people. Anytime that he's out among the public, people go for him. It was a fascinating thing to watch.

> *Wes is very open to ideas. You can come in with suggestions, and he supports that. He's great, and he's a great person to work with.*
>
> *Neve Campbell—Actress*

Scream (1996)

David Arquette; Roger L. Jackson; Neve Campbell; Courtney Cox; Kevin Patrick Walls; Jamie Kennedy; David Booth; Matthew Lillard; Carla Hatley; Rose McGowan; Skeet Ulrich; Drew Barrymore; Lawrence Hecht; Liev Schreiber; W. Earl Brown.

Scream came to me at first from my director of development, Lisa Harrison. She told me that I had to read it over the weekend, that there was going to be a bidding war over it on Monday. I read it and it was ironic, but I felt I

didn't want to go there. I felt it was so violent and so much back where I had started, that I felt I'd screw up my karma if I did it. So, I passed, and Miramax, who we were developing something else with, bought it. We were developing *The Haunting,* but at a certain point they decided they didn't want to do that one, because the scripts were not to their satisfaction.

Now, they come back and tell me that they have this other picture they'd like me to do, and it turns out to be *Scream*. I pass once again. Then I sat and I thought about a lot of the interviews I did where kids would tell me that *Last House* was my best film because I really kicked ass. On *Last House,* I started wondering if I was getting soft. So I decided to do one more to-the-wall horror film. I decided to really kick ass and do an opening scene that was really scary and really violent. I just turned into the old Wes and wasn't worried about offending people. And Drew Barrymore was wonderful in that opening sequence.

I had this wonderful script that was a well-oiled machine. It virtually didn't need anything to it. It was one of those cases when you have the script and you have the stars and you have the support from the studio that isn't afraid to spend money, and you can really do something special.

I think the second *Scream* was fascinating as well. And the continuation of Courtney and David's characters was really fun to work with.

A Turn for the Better

I really wanted to do something different for a change. Not because I don't like the horror genre, but because I'm a person, and I think any artist wants to do different things. The opportunity just never presented itself before. But suddenly Harvey and Bob Weinstein presented it very dramatically. My producer and the crew and I were out for a celebratory dinner following a successful test screening. Somehow Bob and Harvey found us. They literally walked into the restaurant, pushed people away, and told me they wanted to make a deal, a three-picture deal, with me. They wanted me to make a couple of movies for their Dimension Films unit, and, in return, I could do a film of my choice. They started rattling off properties that they owned. One of the things they mentioned was this documentary called *Small Wonders*.

I'm a member of the Academy, and I had been on one of the prejudging committees for documentaries and had seen that documentary about Roberta Guaspari's work as a violin teacher and I told them that was the one I wanted to do. I had been a teacher myself. I love classical music, and it seemed perfect. And so, off we went. And, while we were making *Scream,* we were developing what

was called at that time *50 Violins*. Pamela Gray came in to write it. She had written *A Walk on the Moon*—she was a wonderful writer, and she did a great job.

> *Wes sees reality in a different way than other people do. He has a very clear understanding of the darkness of life. I think he waited twenty years to explore the flip side of the dark side, and I think he got a chance to do that with this film.*
>
> *Meryl Streep—Actress*

Music of the Heart (1999)

Meryl Streep; Angela Bassett; Aidan Quinn; Cloris Leachman; Jane Leeves; Kieran Culkin; Jay O. Sanders; Gloria Estefan.

Working with Meryl Streep is just about as good as it gets. She's arguably the finest American actress living, I think. She is also a highly intelligent woman, very focused, very warm and giving. Her first priority is her family, her husband and her children. So, she was the perfect one to play a schoolteacher and a mother. She came into our project, which originally had been cast with Madonna, rather late in our schedule. She went from never having picked up the violin to playing Bach on the stage of Carnegie Hall with Isaac Stern and Itzhak Perlman so well that their mouths dropped open. Now, if you put an isolated mike on her, it wouldn't have sounded great, but her form, her fingering, everything was perfect. It is amazing what she accomplished in such a short time. And at the same time she did all these things with these kids, many of who were not actors but were musicians. She brought out of them a sense of confidence and a sense of being in a real place. She would engage them in the scene in such a way that everything worked with these kids. She accepted me as an equal and as a collaborator and that was a huge honor and affirmation of my own skills as a director. The whole experience was enormously positive.

Parting Words

It's not necessary to do a huge, expensive film in order to make a powerful film. I would say to anyone who wanted to be in this business, just be aware that it's going to be incredibly difficult, but it is possible. The technology is now there for you to work on a shoestring to have your visions and dreams come true. Just be prepared for a lot of hard work and try to keep your sense of humor and a positive attitude about the human species, because there's a

lot of darkness and a lot of chicanery and finality in the film business. There just are a lot of things that you'd just as soon not know about humans. But there's also a lot of care and love, especially among a cast and crew, that will sustain you through a lot of very, very dark moments.

If I am to be remembered at all, I hope it's that I wasn't predictable. That I have a sense of humor and I wasn't afraid to look in the dark places, rather than going around them and pretending they weren't there.

Wes Craven Filmography

Last House on the Left (1972)
Stranger in Our House (TV, 1978)
The Hills Have Eyes (1978)
Deadly Blessing (1981)
Swamp Thing (1982)
Invitation to Hell (TV, 1984)
A Nightmare on Elm Street (1984)
Chiller (TV, 1985)
The Twilight Zone (TV series, multiple episodes, 1985)
The Hills Have Eyes Part II (1985)
Casebusters (TV, 1986)
Deadly Friend (1986)
The Serpent and the Rainbow (1988)
Shocker (1989)
Night Visions (TV, 1990)
The People Under the Stairs (1992)
Nightmare Café (TV series, 1992)
New Nightmare (1994)
Vampire in Brooklyn (1995)
Scream (1996)
Scream 2 (1997)
Music of the Heart (1999)

Scream 3 (2000)
Cursed (2003)

Awards and Nominations

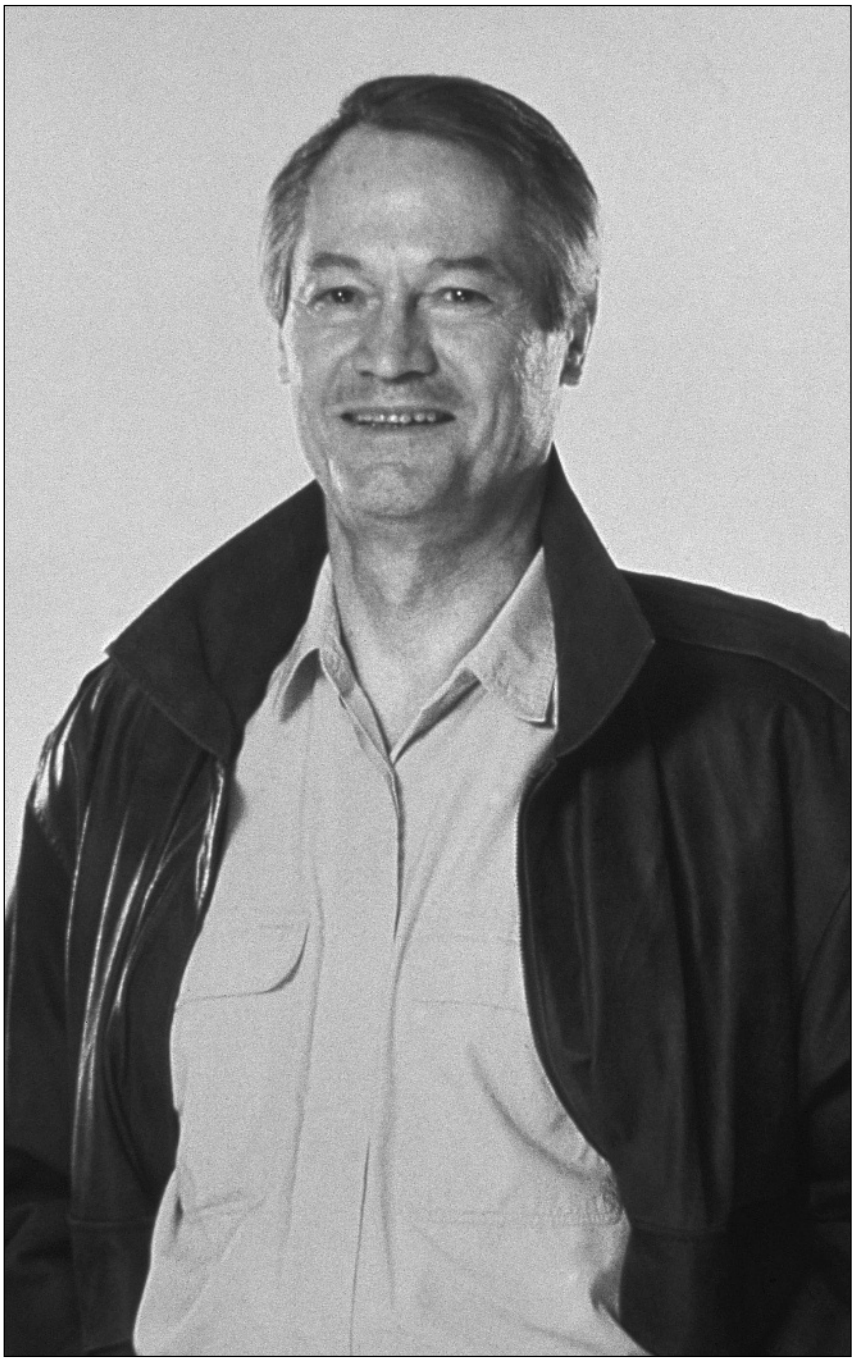
Avoriaz Fantastic Film Festival
A Nightmare on Elm Street, Critics Award, 1985

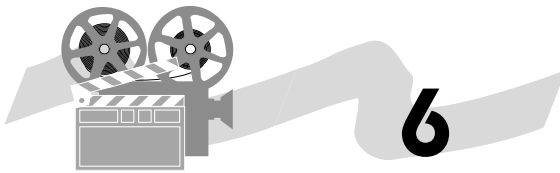
Brussels International Festival of Fantasy Film
The People Under the Stairs, Pegasus Audience Award, 1992

Catalonian International Film Festival
The Hills Have Eyes, Prize of the International Critics' Jury, 1977

Cinequest San Jose Film Festival
Maverick Tribute Award, 2000

Fantasporto
New Nightmare, Best Screenplay, International Fantasy Film Award, 1995
New Nightmare, Best Film, International Fantasy Film Award (nominated), 1995
Shocker, Best Film, International Fantasy Film Award (nominated), 1990





6

The Films of Roger Corman

Roger Corman ranks as one of Hollywood's most incredible success stories. He has produced more than 550 films and directed 50 others, and his influence on American film goes far beyond his own energetic, creative low-budget movies. He is arguably one of Hollywood's most gifted and masterful filmmakers.

Thanks to his keen ability to spot young talents, his most lasting legacy will undoubtedly be the legion of producers, directors, writers, and actors he has fostered.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1926, Corman graduated from Beverly Hills High School. In 1947, he received a bachelor's degree in engineering from Stanford University. After a stint in the Navy, he took a job at Twentieth Century Fox, and by 1949 was a story analyst at the studio. Disenchanted with studio protocol, he left Fox for England, where he did postgraduate work in Modern English literature at Oxford's Balliol College. Upon his return to Hollywood, Corman worked briefly as a literary agent.

In 1953, Corman sold his first screenplay, entitled *Highway Dragnet*, to Allied Artists and served as associate producer on that film. With the proceeds of the sale, he made *The Monster From the Ocean Floor* the following year, his first film as an independent producer, on the remarkable budget of $18,000. The early films he made for the then-fledgling American International Pictures are what helped make AIP the powerhouse "min-major" it became in later years.

In contemplating Corman's phenomenal success, consider that he once said, "Always make the monster bigger than your leading lady." Perhaps Roger Corman had more insight into how to make a successful film than all the so-called Hollywood moguls put together.

Because Corman has produced and directed so many films, I have chosen not to list his films during the conversation, rather just to list them in his filmography at the end.

The Conversation

My earliest memories of films, as a child, were the Saturday matinees with my friends. We'd see the double feature and a serial. The serials were the classic cliffhangers, and I loved them.

Living in Southern California probably played a role in my decision to be a filmmaker. I started out to be an engineer, following in my father's footsteps. I think the lure of motion pictures, and the fact that, when I'd gone to school, the parents of some of my friends worked in the film industry—just the general excitement and glamour of the film industry as such, drew me in.

When I started, Hollywood was highly unionized, and it was very difficult to get a job. So, I came out of Stanford with a degree in engineering and took a job with Western Union, riding a bicycle delivering messages. And, at that time, the studios worked six days a week shooting, but the office employees worked five. So, I volunteered to work a sixth day for nothing if I could work on the set and observe and learn. And they said yes—and I did observe and learn. Part of my plan was that they would be aware that I was an eager young guy, and I got promoted to reader in the story department. I was called a story analyst, sort of an attempt to make us feel we were more important than we were. They had been looking for an offbeat western for Gregory Peck, and I remembered a script that I'd covered called *The Big Gun* that I thought was pretty good. I wrote a revision of the script and handed it in, and they liked it. The picture was made based on my revisions. The head of the story department got a bonus for his "great work" on the script—and so I left Fox.

> *He certainly defined independent filmmaking in the 1960s and 1970s. He's always worked completely underneath the radar of conventional Hollywood and has made five or six hundred films in the process. That makes him the quintessential independent.*
>
> *James Cameron—Writer-Director*

Roger Learns the Ropes

Highway Dragnet was a turning point for me. I had had several jobs knocking around town. I had been a stagehand at Channel 13 at the time. I was a literary agent and I wrote a script that I called, at the time, *The House in the Sea*, which became *Highway Dragnet* based upon a trip I'd taken to the Salton Sea. The Salton Sea is overflowing its banks in the desert, and I saw all these old houses that were deserted. The first floors were flooded, and I thought it would be a great climax to a picture—some sort of chase across the desert and a shoot-out in the flooded house. So, I started with the climax of the film and worked back to create my story.

When I sold the script of *The House in the Sea,* I asked to go along as an associate producer for no salary, on the basis that I would learn and also get a credit as associate producer. So, when the film ended I was able to set myself up as a writer-producer. I had a little office, which was actually the reception office for an agent who didn't have much money, and I operated out of that. I took the money from the sale of the script for *The House in the Sea* and then borrowed money from various classmates from college. I put together $12,000 in cash, and a laboratory deferment to bring it up to $18,000, and we shot the picture in six days on the coast of Malibu.

I was surprisingly confident. I think if I were to do it now, I would be very worried that I couldn't do it. But at the age of twenty-five or whatever, I had ambition and confidence. You do things that, when you're older and smarter, you wouldn't do.

> *Roger was a pioneer. Even though he was not a throwback to D. W. Griffith and people like that, he did movies the way they did back then. Roger Corman was a cradle for my generation of actors, writers, directors, and cinematographers that came out of the era.*
>
> *Bruce Dern—Actor*

Along Came American International

Monster from the Ocean Floor was originally titled *It Stalked the Ocean Floor,* but the distributors thought that title was too arty, so they changed it to *Monster from the Ocean Floor*. Anyway, *Monster* did start my career as a producer. So, I took the money from that and did a road-racing action film called *The Fast and the Furious*. I had several offers from major studios for the film but I realized that the trap for an independent producer was that you

made a picture but waited a long time to get your money back. So you couldn't make many films. And what I wanted to do was to get an advance back immediately to make a series of films. So, I went with a new company, which was at that time called American Releasing, which was run by Jim Nicholson and Sam Arkoff. I told them I would give them the film if they would give me all of my money back immediately as an advance against distribution and I would do the same thing on three more films, so I could set myself up as a producer. They were happy to do that because *The Fast and the Furious* enabled them to start their company. It then meant that I would be able to be a steady supplier of films for them, and they could get their company rolling.

My relationship with American International Pictures, which was the final name of American Releasing, was a very good one. Jim Nicholson and Sam Arkoff were a little bit older than I was. They had a little bit more experience, but they were comparatively young. Jim has been a theater owner and understood the distribution of motion pictures, and Sam was a lawyer and one of the smartest negotiators I'd ever seen. So, working with them, I learned a great deal about both distribution and the law in relationship to motion pictures. Together we would come up with ideas and several films I made for them; we never even had a contract. I trusted them and they trusted me. They would give me money, I'd make the film, and at a later date, we would draw up a contract.

Jim and Sam did have considerable influence on my later career as an independent producer-director. I'd always been independent, but I'd worked primarily with them, and what I learned from them enabled me not only to set up as an independent production company but to eventually start New World Pictures, which is my distribution company.

> *I don't know how he made the turn from what he was studying into show business, but he did. Thank God he did, because look how rich this legacy is that he's given us.*
>
> *Nancy Sinatra—Singer-Actress*

Exploitation Films

My early films, and probably many of my current films, were called exploitation films, and I see nothing wrong with that statement. As a matter of fact, when Steven Spielberg did *Jaws*, Vincent Canby in the *New York Times*

wrote, "what is *Jaws* but a big-budget Roger Corman film." What happened subsequently was that the major studios began making the type of exploitation film that I'd been making. But I must admit, they made them bigger, and, of course, I must admit, they made them better.

A Western Gets the Ball Rolling

The first film I directed was called *Five Guns West*. I shot it on a nine-day schedule at a ranch in the San Fernando Valley. I was very, very nervous. I had been confident about my work as a producer, but as soon as I made the transition to director, I became shaky. I was so nervous I couldn't eat lunch for the first five or six days. All I could do was shoot in the morning and stare at the script and study it to try to figure out what I was going to do in the afternoon.

The normal schedule for low-budget films in the 1950s was ten days—two five-day weeks—and that was what I normally did. I undercut that a couple of times. I did *Bucket of Blood* in five days and I did *Little Shop of Horrors* in two days and a night, but that was really an experiment and a joke to see if I could do it.

I remember Bob Towne, who went on to become an Academy Award–winning screenwriter—and a good friend of mine—said to me, "You must remember, Roger, making a film is not like a track meet. It's not about how fast you go." And I said, "You're right, Bob. I'll never make a film in two days again."

> *Roger is an interesting blend of businessman and audience advocate. He believes that he can make an entertaining movie at a price. That's an unbeatable formula.*
>
> *Ron Howard—Director*

Everyone Has a Favorite

I've been asked a number of times which film I directed was my favorite, and it changes from day to day. Sometimes, I'll pick this or that, and another day I don't like any of them. For today, I'll probably pick a film called *The Intruder,* about racial integration in schools in the South, with a new, young actor named Bill Shatner. It won a couple of film festivals and got wonderful reviews in the New York papers. I still remember an opening line. It said, "This motion picture is a major credit to the entire American film industry." It was the first film I ever made that lost money.

Back to the Grind

I had been making a number of ten-day black-and-white films that would be shown as double features. Two black-and-white horror films and two black-and-white science-fiction films. American International asked me to make two ten-day horror films. I told them that I believed that this was sales gimmick that had run its course. I would rather try a fifteen-day film in color and just make one film, because I wanted to do something different, and there was validity to what I'd said. They agreed, and the picture I chose was called *The Fall of the House of Usher*, the Edgar Allan Poe story that I'd read in school and always loved.

I've made just about every type of film there is. I've made mostly horror films, and I don't know why. I think anyone who's working in a creative medium is working partially out of their conscious mind and partially out of their unconscious. There probably is something somewhere in the back of my mind that makes me fascinated with fantasy, particularly with horror.

More Edgar Allan Poe Pictures

After the success of *The Fall of the House of Usher* AIP asked me to make another Poe picture, *The Pit and the Pendulum*, which I did. I think I made five, six, or seven of them. They wanted me to make more, and I said that's enough. I'm beginning to repeat myself. I've got the same sets, and essentially the same story. I wanted to do something different.

The Poe films were shot almost entirely on sound stages. I'd always had many theories, right or wrong, and the theories were about how I made my films. I felt Poe films, being psychological horror film stories, represented the unconscious mind, and I should shoot them in an artificial environment, because the unconscious mind didn't see realities. So, I shot all of them except one—which I just changed because I got tired of my own theory—on sound stages, and I wanted to change and shoot in natural locations.

At that time the Hell's Angels were very much in the news. I saw a picture, I think either in *Time* or *Newsweek,* of a Hell's Angels funeral in which all of the bikers were on motorcycles with the coffin going to the graveyard. I showed the picture to Jim Nicholson and Sam Arkoff at lunch one day and told them this was the picture I want to make. As soon as they saw the picture, they said yes, and we made the whole deal right there at lunch.

Early in 1970, I was in Ireland shooting a World War I flying picture called *Von Richthofen and Brown*. By that time I had directed somewhere between fifty and sixty films in, I think, twelve or thirteen years—something

like that. I was so tired, I remember each day as I drove out from Dublin, and I'd come to a fork in the road. One way was the airport where we were shooting and the other was to Gallway Bay. Each day I came to that fork in the road I thought I would just like to drive to Gallway Bay. I barely completed the film, so I said to myself, I will complete this film, but I'm going to take a year off, the traditional sabbatical rest. So, I took the year off but to keep busy, because I soon got bored, I started a distribution company, which became New World Pictures. My intention was to start the company and then turn it over to somebody, but it became successful almost immediately; it was both a production and distribution company. Our first film was a big success. Our second film was also a big success, and I couldn't find anybody to run the company. So, I thought, I'll run it awhile before I go back to directing, and I ran it for almost twenty years before I went back to directing film.

New World got off to such a fast start that within a year and a half, we were the biggest independent distribution company in the United States. We were almost competing with the majors. They knew who we were. They were aware of our distribution schedule, but even with our great position as the number-one independent, we couldn't really challenge the major studios.

> *Nobody in the world would have made a little tiny movie called* The Little Shop of Horrors, *which is such an amazing idea to begin with. He's the one. He just was an amazing trendsetter.*
>
> *Jonathan Demme—Director*

Discovering New Talent

Most of the directors who started their careers with me started as assistants and worked themselves up. But with Marty Scorsese, there was an independent film he made, and I was very, very impressed by him. I called him and we talked. I thought he was a bright and talented young man, so I hired him to do *Boxcar Bertha*, a gangster story that we shot in rural Arkansas. And I must say, with no knowledge of Arkansas, he did an amazing, authentic rural picture that was a big success. I think it shows Marty's ability and dedication, that he was able to make that transition.

Ron Howard, of course, started as an actor. I was doing a picture called *Eat My Dust* that was a comedy, a teenage car-chase film, and he was then starring in *Happy Days*. He was my first choice to be the lead in my film, and I didn't really think I would get him, but he agreed to do it, and I was very sur-

prised. As it turned out, he was very good in the picture. It opened on a Friday and was a huge success and Ron had a percentage of the profits. So, I called him on Monday morning, about 10:00, after doing some bookings for the second week of distribution, and I told him how big the film had opened and how well he was going to do with his share of the profits and he said, "I know that. I've been waiting for your call. I assume you're going to do a sequel." I said yes. He said, "Wait right there. I'm coming right in." He came in and he said, "When an actor is asked to do a sequel, he wants more money. I don't want any more money. I will take exactly the same deal I had on the first picture, and I'll do another job for nothing. I'll direct the picture." I told him he always looked like a director to me. I will say that Ron was probably the coolest first-time-out director I've ever seen.

Francis Coppola came out of the UCLA film school. He worked first as an editor for me and then as my assistant. I went to Europe to do a Grand Prix Formula One racing picture and Francis came along as my first assistant director, sound man, and second-unit director on *The Young Racers*. That was the best staff I ever had. Francis was first assistant, Bob Towne was my second assistant, and Menahem Golan was my third assistant. As we traveled around Europe shooting one race after another, I realized that I had a whole crew along with equipment built into a Volkswagen microbus, which incidentally Francis had worked on the construction of.

I had to go back to America to do a film, but thought we could do another film very inexpensively here in Europe. We couldn't stay in England because of work permits, but I offered Francis the chance to take the microbus across the Irish Sea to Ireland, where we could work and write and direct a little horror film, which became *Dementia 13*—that was a big success. Francis, I'd always thought, is one of the finest directors I've ever worked with. Not only is he very talented as a writer, but he has knowledge of film technique.

I was barely aware of James Cameron when he first started working for us. I was doing a picture, *Battle Beyond the Stars*, which was the biggest-budget science-fiction picture we'd ever done, and we were falling behind schedule with the special effects. My studio is in Venice and my office is in Brentwood, for a variety of reasons, so I asked my ace assistant, Gale Anne Hurd, to go down to the studio and find out what was going wrong in special effects. She stayed there for two days and came back and said, "Your special effects crew really doesn't know what they are doing, except for one young model-maker named Jim Cameron." So I went down to the studio and talked with Jim and promoted him. By the end of the picture he had been promoted three times

and was head of the special effects department. On the next picture, he was head of special effects, production, and design. On the next picture he did all three of those jobs and was also a second-unit director. Jim is an example of somebody who rose very rapidly, totally on ability.

Jonathan Demme started as a writer, a producer, and eventually as a director. He had a little less formal film training than some of the other directors who started with me, but he learned very rapidly. I would say he learned a little bit more like I did, by learning on the set rather than going to film school. The great thing about Jonathan is how fast he learned. With every picture he got better until he emerged as what he is today, one of the finest American directors. Actually, he's one of the finest in the world.

I sensed something special in all of these directors. I was unable to predict that they would rise to the heights they have. But they had the three attributes I looked for: They were all intelligent, they all were willing to work very hard, and they had that something intangible, that creative spark, and they brought something new and original to the work.

I give these young directors a great deal of creative control, both with the young new directors and veteran directors. I think it comes from the fact that I was a director myself and I think that on the set the director should be in control. I work with the directors and still continue to work with directors in preproduction, but once the picture starts, I hardly even go to the set. I'm there for coffee the first day and then I leave it to the director. If there's a problem, I don't even go to the set. I will call him at lunchtime or in the evening, and we'll discuss it. So, for me, the producer's work is in preproduction and then again in postproduction, and during the filming it's the director's movie.

I've been quoted as saying, "Make the most of what you've got," which I would translate as, use what you have around you. I've found from experience that working with low budgets, which is what we normally do, you're better off using the elements at hand. Whatever resources you have, make the best low-budget film you can, rather than pretending to make a big-budget film. I think you're more likely to fail doing that. I think you'll have a great chance of success if you recognize what the limitations of your budget schedules are and try to work within those limitations.

Discovering More Talent

A number of actors who have gone on to acclaim, Academy Awards, and stardom have worked with me. Jack Nicholson, Bobby De Niro, Sylvester

Stallone, Peter Fonda, Charlie Bronson, David Carradine, and many more. I think one of the reasons I was able to find young actors of this talent was the fact that I studied acting myself as part of my preparation for directing. I believe in going with the best available, regardless of their name value. So, I was able to find and use good young actors when others were either afraid to give them a chance or were playing it safe and taking actors of a little greater name value. In my youth-oriented films I was able to come up with actors like Jack Nicholson and other young actors like that. But in my Poe films, I needed a different type of actor. For instance, in the *House of Usher,* the lead character was Roderick Usher, a very distinguished, intelligent, sensitive older man. My first choice was Vincent Price to play that role, and luckily I got him.

It was Roger Corman who was kind of like everybody's angel. He opened the door for us to get that almost impossible first opportunity.
Diane Ladd—Actress

Roger in Front of the Camera

I enjoy my secondary career as a supporting actor. It may be that I used to give some of these directors' orders and now they can give them to me. It began with Francis Coppola who cast me as one of the senators on the Senate crime-investigating committee in *Godfather II*. In fact, all of the senators were writers, producers, or directors who were Francis's friends.

The first day we shot, we went to lunch with him, and I think it was Bill Bowers who asked Francis how he chose us, since we were not actors. He said he'd been listening to the crime committee on television and he said that the senators all looked distinguished, intelligent, and spoke well, and they were all awkward on camera. He felt if he could get writers, producers, and directors, he'd get the quality he was looking for and they would all be a little awkward on camera.

I was unusually awkward, because the first day, right before I said my first line, somebody called out and said, "Hey Roger, don't get nervous, but your entire Hollywood career depends on how you say these lines." It was Jack Nicholson, who, by prearrangement with Francis, had come over from another sound stage to throw me off before I said my first line. After that, I played roles for Jonathan Demme, Ron Howard, and a number of other directors I've worked with. It's partly a joke and partly just for fun of working with my old friends.

Sell the Company and Start a New One

I didn't really start out to sell New World Pictures. Three Hollywood lawyers came to me and offered to buy it. They offered me more than I thought the company was worth. So, after a little negotiation, I sold it to them. I don't remember why this happened, but it took a number of months to draw up the contract. We were supposed to sign it one evening, so after working until midnight that night, around 12:00 or 12:30 A.M., we signed the contract. They gave me a check and we drank champagne. I went home, and the next morning, I started another company.

My new production-distribution company was called Concord New Horizons, which I just changed to New Concord because it was easier to put on the Internet and I was able to register that name as *newconcord.com*. It's really a continuation of New World. It's a smaller company because we put less stress on theatrical distribution, because low-budget and medium-budget films today don't play quite as much in theaters as they once did. It is a worldwide distribution-production company doing a little more work overseas than we formerly did. I have a little studio here in Hollywood and another studio in Ireland. We make and distribute about twenty pictures a year. In the future, we will probably cut that number down to ten or twelve pictures a year, probably on slightly higher budgets, and will be a little bit more personally involved with them. I think I can do better work with fewer films.

The business has changed in a number of ways from when I started. From the production standpoint, those changes are mostly in technical equipment. The cameras are more portable, lighter, and better; the sound equipment is far better, and grip and electrical is better. Before we used to be studio-bound; now you can go to more natural locations with smaller, lighter equipment and shoot more efficiently. I think it's a great tool for the filmmaker to be able to use this new equipment.

From the business side of it, I think—for the independents—is that when I started in the late 1950s, no matter how low a budget I had on a film, every film got a full theatrical release. Today, the major studios so dominate theatrical distribution that, I'd say, no more than twenty to twenty-five percent of our films get a theatrical release. We're more dependent on home video, pay TV, television, and now DVD, with the Internet right around the corner.

With regard to the new equipment being lighter and more portable, my daughter Catherine just produced a low-budget film for us. It's about mountain climbing, and with a light digital camera, she was able to go up the

mountain with the crew and shoot, reaching places that would have been impossible to shoot with a regular motion-picture camera.

The American motion-picture industry dominates world cinema, probably more so than any other American industry. But there is so much emphasis on the blockbuster, the huge $100 million or $150 million production with a $20 million advertising campaign. American films have stepped away from the more personal film or art-driven films. While I think the major studios are failing in this area, it is also providing an opportunity for the independents. We don't have to appeal to the lowest common denominator and get giant hordes of people. We can make smaller films with lower budgets that are more personal and maybe more interesting to one segment of the audience. This is a big opportunity for the independents and we hope to be working more in that area.

Parting Words

I don't know how to exactly sum up my career other than to think of myself as a filmmaker. I've done everything, every thing from being a messenger at Twentieth Century Fox to being a truck driver on location to being a writer, producer, director, distributor, and even a sometime-actor. So, I would say that I'm somebody who has worked in all areas of motion pictures. I would hope that I've contributed something to the American film industry and I've had a great time doing it.

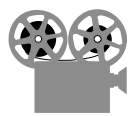
I'm not sure that I will be remembered in years to come. But, if I am remembered in film history, it will probably be as a medium- to low-budget producer-director who contributed along the way to giving other people opportunities.

Roger Corman Filmography

Five Guns West (1955)
Swamp Women (1955)
The Beast with a Million Eyes (uncredited, 1955)
Apache Woman (1955)

The Oklahoma Woman (1956)
It Conquered the World (1956)
Gunslinger (1956)
The Day the World Ended (1956)
Not of This Earth (1957)
Attack of the Crab Monsters (1957)
Teenage Doll (1957)
The Undead (1957)
Sorority Girl (1957)
Rock All Night (1957)
Naked Paradise (1957)
Carnival Rock (1957)
Saga of the Viking Women and Their Voyage to the Waters of the Great Sea Serpent (1957)
War of the Satellites (1958)
Teenage Cave Man (1958)
She Gods of the Shark Reef (1958)
Machine Gun Kelly (1958)
I, Mobster (1958)
A Bucket of Blood (1959)
The Wasp Woman (1960)
Ski Troop Attack (1960)
The Little Shop of Horrors (1960)
Last Woman on Earth (1960)
House of Usher (1960)
Atlas (1960)
Pit and the Pendulum (1961)
The Intruder (1961)
Creature from the Hunted Sea (1961)
Tales of Terror (1962)
Tower of London (1962)
The Premature Burial (1962)
The Young Racers (1963)
X (1963)
The Terror (1963)
The Raven (1963)
The Haunted Palace (1963)
The Masque of the Red Death (1964)

The Tomb of Ligeia (1965)
The Wild Angels (1966)
The St. Valentine's Day Massacre (1967)
The Trip (1967)
A Time for Killing (uncredited, 1967)
Target: Harry (1969)
De Sade (uncredited, 1969)
Gas-s-s-s (1970)
Bloody Mama (1970)
The Red Baron (1971)
Deathsport (uncredited, 1978)
Frankenstein Unbound (1990)



Awards and Nominations

Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Films
Life Career Award, 1988

American Cinema Editors
Golden Eddie Filmmaker of the Year Award, 1997

Casting Society of America
Lifetime Achievement Award, 1997

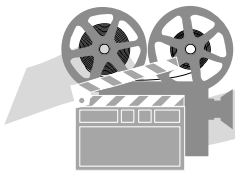
Catalonian International Film Festival
Time-Machine Honorary Award, 1998

Florida Film Festival
Lifetime Achievement Award, 1997

Los Angeles Film Critics Association
Career Achievement Award, 1996

Malibu International Film Festival
Independent Filmmaker Award, 1999

Venice Film Festival
The Wild Angels, Golden Lion (nominated), 1966



7

The Films of Alan Parker

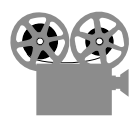
Director, writer, producer Alan Parker was born in London, England, in 1944. He wrote and directed his first film, *Bugsy Malone,* in 1975. The film was a musical pastiche of 1920s gangster films, with an entire cast of children. The highly original film received eight British Academy Award nominations and five awards. With the release of *Bugsy Malone,* Alan Parker was off and running as a director who would continue to challenge audiences with each new movie he directed.

A founding member of the Directors Guild of Great Britain, Parker has lectured at film schools around the world. In 1985 he was honored by the British Academy with the prestigious Michael Balcon Award for Outstanding Contribution to British Cinema, and in November 1995 Parker was awarded a CBE by Queen Elizabeth II for services to the British film industry.

During the filming of *Angela's Ashes,* he was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Directors Guild of Great Britain.

In January 1998, Parker took up his post as chairman of the Board of Governors of the British Film Institute. In August of 1999, Parker was appointed first chairman of the newly formed Film Council.

The interview that follows was conducted in London, England.



The Conversation

I grew up in a place called Islington in North London, which is a working-class background. Sort of "cancer flats," as they call it here. Tenement, as you

might call it in America. Pretty ordinary background, really. No aspirations to be a film director, that's for sure.

No one in my family really had any aspirations to be involved in anything to do with film. I was very fortunate in that my mother had two twin brothers, called Jim and Fred. And my uncle Jim and uncle Fred were really fantastic in so much as they never got married, which meant that they spent a great deal of time looking after me. They had all sorts of hobbies, one of which was photography. They kind of made everything themselves, including their own enlarger, and that early introduction to photography is something I remember. I can remember being very small and involved in it. Maybe that was the beginning of being interested in certain areas of photography.

I left school when I was eighteen years old. I didn't go to university, and I really wanted to write, more than anything. I used to write essays and bits and pieces and sorts of things. But I never really was focused in on what to do. I also didn't really have any advice on what area I might go into. I remember on television a documentary about an advertising agency, which looked rather good, actually, and I ended up getting a job in advertising. I really wanted to be a writer, but I had to start in the mailroom. But I always hoped that I might get a junior copywriter's job, so in the evenings I used to write ads.

There were actually lots of people in agencies to encourage me, and I ended up getting a job as a copywriter. The great thing about advertising, from a British point of view, is that it didn't have a kind of class distinction as other jobs had. If you were half-bright they gave you a chance. I was very fortunate that they gave me that chance.

Eventually they made me sort of head of a creative group, or whatever it was called. That was at the very beginnings of TV commercials in this country. The only way you could get a commercial directed was to bring someone from New York. New York was really the sort of hubbub of everything interesting that was happening in those days. I told my boss that in order for us to learn about commercials, could he see his way clear to give us a little bit of money so that we could experiment. We shot a 16mm pilot commercial in the basement of the agency. Eventually these commercials got more and more elaborate. But we weren't ever allowed to put them on air, because they didn't have a full union crew. So, they had to be remade after we made them. On one commercial I wrote, the producer said to me something about saying

"action," and since I didn't know anything else about production, that seemed the easiest thing for me to do, to say "action" and "cut." Right there and then the bug bit me—by mistake, really—since I didn't intend to get into directing. That led to my directing full-time.

I can remember I did some commercials for a bread company. I always thought it was going to be hugely difficult, because you get on a film set and you see this large film crew, and maybe they'll think, what a complete idiot—he doesn't know anything. Then you suddenly realize that they're actually there to help you. I was always in shock, and still am, really, at how incredible film crews are in helping me as a director to make my films. And I remember just thinking it was comparatively easy. I have never had any kind of dream or aspirations to be doing it and I always thought I should pinch myself because I was so lucky to discover that I actually found something that I loved doing.

Looking back, I came from a generation of filmmakers who couldn't have really started anywhere but commercials, because we had no film industry in the United Kingdom at the time. People like Ridley Scott, Tony Scott, Adrian Lyne, Hugh Hudson, and myself. So commercials proved to be incredibly important. But we were never really taken seriously as filmmakers, because everybody used to say, well, you know, it's a funny old business to come from.

Eventually, I started a commercial production company of my own. It was quite a lucrative business, so we had a few bucks to spend. I made a fifty-minute film called *No Hard Feelings*, which I shot in 16mm. It was a story I had written about London and the Blitz. We eventually ended up selling it to television. I had also written the screenplay called *Melody*, which was the first film that producer David Puttnam made. David and I worked in advertising together. I wrote *Melody* but didn't direct it. Then BBC came to me and asked me if I would do a film called *Evacuees*, which was going to be their Christmas special. It was hugely successful, and from that I was then able to do *Bugsy Malone*.

I always thought of myself primarily as a writer and not a director, because I was writing before I was directing. For a number of years, when I used to list myself on my passport, I wouldn't dream of putting "director," because I would have thought it would have been a bit too pretentious. My writing was always more important to me in the early days. I wrote two or three more screenplays, which in London's very depressed film industry was

very hard to get done. Everything came back with a stamp on it, saying they were too parochial, too parochial. So, I thought, all right, I'll write something American.

> *What makes Alan different, in my opinion, is he is insanely dedicated. He stays focused on the movie.*
>
> *Scott Baio—Actor*

Bugsy Malone (1975)

Scott Baio; Florrie Dugger; Jodie Foster; John Cassisi; Martin Lev; Paul Murphy; Sheridan Earl Russell; Albin "Humpty" Jenkins; Paul Chirelstein; Andrew Paul; Davidson Knight; Michael Jackson; Jeffrey Stevens.

I wrote this story, which was a pastiche of the American musical and the American gangster film. It was my eldest son's idea to put kids in the film. I did that because it's the kind of thing you do if you're new to films, not really knowing any better. But, actually, Francis Coppola said to me once, "The most important thing about being creative is to be naïve, because you actually do fresh things; you don't have a set of rules that stops you from thinking about doing things."

The first thing that I did was to go to every American school that was here. I even went to every American Air Force base to interview kids. Then I went to New York and did a lot of casting there, as well as ordinary schools in Brooklyn, and I saw kids in Los Angeles. Casting was far and away the most difficult thing to do. I spent a year at it.

Most of the kids in *Bugsy Malone* had never acted before. Someone suggested that I should meet with a young girl by the name of Jodie Foster, who I didn't know at the time. She hadn't yet done *Taxi Driver*, although she did end up shooting it before she came to do our film. I met with Jodie in Los Angeles, and it was quite extraordinary, because she was an amazingly bright kid.

I remember one day the cameraman and I were discussing something that was to do with camera left or camera right. Jodie stepped in and told us the right way to do it. At age twelve, she already knew the mechanics of making movies. She was very, very adult for her age.

It's funny, because when I look back on *Bugsy Malone,* it doesn't really fit

into the rest of my work. It was a pragmatic exercise to get started, because I couldn't make any of the films I really wanted to make at the time. I ended up doing this very odd, kind of crazy film. I look back on it now and think it was a mad thing to do. I think it's just an oddity with regards to my work. Whenever they do retrospectives of my films they always ask for that one and I always try to drop it out.

Midnight Express (1978)

Brad Davis; Irene Miracle; Bo Hopkins; Paolo Bonacelli; Randy Quaid; John Hurt; Paul L. Smith; Norbert Weisser; Mike Kellin.

I went to New York to see a stage show called *The Wiz*, which Universal wanted me to do as a film. I met with the people afterwards, and I think they kind of got the message that I wasn't really interested in doing it, and so we said good-bye. I remember I was walking back along Fifth Avenue, and I saw Peter Guber, who was coming out of Columbia Pictures. We chatted for a bit, and then he said he had something he wanted me to read. We went up to his office and it turned out to be the manuscript for *Midnight Express*. A lot of coincidental things began to occur; for example, David Puttnam was going to move to Los Angeles and he was going to go into business with Peter Guber. So I said to Puttnam that if he would do the script with me, maybe I would do it, so I kind of agreed to do it. In Los Angeles Peter Guber brought in a young Oliver Stone to work on the script. So, Oliver came to London and, in our outer office there, he used to type away every day and wrote the screenplay for *Midnight Express*. He wrote a very brilliant screenplay, too.

When you're making a film, you're very conscious of the fact that the whole thing is an illusion. There's a scene, for instance, in *Midnight Express* where Brad Davis bites the tongue out of a character called Rifki. There are photographs of me filming it where I was completely and utterly obsessed and absorbed in getting it done. My face is almost as manic as Brad's is in the film. I remember turning around and looking back and there was just the camera operator and the focus puller and no one else. The whole crew had just vanished because they just found the whole thing so difficult to watch. You suddenly realize you become a bit crazy when you make a film like that. You don't realize the effect it has on an audience until you show

it to them. I remember the first time that we showed the film to normal audience, and when that scene came up, I remember a couple of people running out and somebody was throwing up in the restroom. It's the first time that I had become aware of the responsibility you have when you're making films. The effect of what is, in fact, just this shot against that shot against this shot. All of which is actually make-believe for us, because film is make-believe. You suddenly realize that the audience doesn't know if it's real. It has an extraordinary effect on them. I had never quite realized that until doing that film. It's then that you realize that you do have a responsibility to the audience.

I went to Istanbul and visited the real prison where the story had actually happened. But we weren't going to be allowed to make the film in Turkey, so we ended up making it in Malta, because there was this old fort there. It didn't look like the real place at all. The real prison was much more modern. But I think it gave it a cinematic edge.

It was a difficult film to make insomuch as it was made in fifty-three days, and we worked six and seven days a week. We were all in a prison for all of that time, and that kind of took its toll on the crew. It was a very, very difficult film to do, and I think that we all went a bit crazy making it. I mean, just the nature of the story.

It wasn't a necessity to have a movie star in the lead. I remember Richard Gere was a favorite to do it at one point, but then he pulled out, which sort of pointed us in the direction of Brad Davis. But because he was the least well known of everyone we looked at, we did take quite a chance on him, but I am certainly glad we did.

I rewrote the whole ending once we were in Malta. The death of the character that actor Paul Smith played sort of evolved out of us shooting it. There was a very, very important moral involved here. It doesn't matter how badly the character that Paul Smith played treats Brad Davis's character; in the end to actually physically shoot Paul, as originally written, wasn't going to be right. I contrived the accidental death so that the audience gets their fix, their satisfaction out of seeing the end of this terrible villain. And yet the morality of the piece hopefully is still intact because however awful he is to Brad, nothing justifies someone killing somebody. So, that's how that evolved.

I think that I'm very conscious that violence does have an effect. I think that, as filmmakers, we have to be very responsible. I think that if I made *Midnight Express* now, I would be very conscious of the violence within the

piece. I think that when you start out as a young filmmaker, you don't really think about that. And if it scares the life out of the audience—then you think that's good. I think that filmmakers have to be very, very responsible. I think I would make *Midnight Express* very differently now. As you get older you see things somewhat differently.

> *The nice thing about the way Alan works with everyone is that he allowed us to really feel like classmates. We felt like real students, even though we were just making a movie.*
>
> *Irene Cara—Singer-Actress*

Fame (1980)

Irene Cara; Lee Curreri; Laura Dean; Antonia Franceschi; Boyd Gaines; Albert Hague; Tresa Hughes; Maureen Teefy; Anne Meara; Debbie Allen.

I was originally sent a script called *Hot Lunch,* which wasn't a great script. It was a great premise about this school called The High School for Performing Arts in New York, which I had never heard of before. I went to the school and I hung out with the kids for quite a few months. Then I wrote my version of that, which I then called *Fame.* The reason that I had to change the title was that there was pornographic film called *Hot Lunch*, which actually was showing at the time.

I didn't want this sort of classy MGM musical where you stop and then there's the musical number. I wanted it to come out in real situations, which it kind of does. Basically there's someone dancing, and there's a reason for them to be dancing—and the same goes for the singing. I served my musical apprenticeship with *Bugsy Malone,* so by the time I came to do *Fame* I knew a little bit about how to go about it. I think so much of the stuff I put into the film came out of the kids.

I had been casting for quite a long time by the time Irene Cara came in. We were reading a part, and I asked her if she could also sing. She said yes. I asked Michael Gore, who was doing the music, to take her into a recording studio to do a little test. He came back and told me that I was never going to believe how well she could sing, and so with Irene we got lucky. I think she's quite a good singer. I couldn't believe how good she was.

We weren't allowed to use the actual High School for the Performing

Arts, so we used another high school. Actually, it's made up of three different schools, which come together as one. The Board of Education wouldn't let me use the actual school, because they felt there was too much bad language in the original screenplay. I went and appealed to the lady who was in charge of the entire New York School District. After pleading with her to let us use the school, she said, "Mr. Parker, we can't risk you doing for New York high school the same thing you did for Turkish prisons." I took that as no.

Shoot the Moon (1982)

Albert Finney; Diane Keaton; Karen Allen; Peter Weller; Dana Hill; Viveka Davis; Tracey Gold; Tina Yothers.

In relationship to my other films, *Shoot the Moon* is very different. The cost was much lower and it was a more leisurely film to do. It was set in one house. We couldn't find exactly the house we wanted, so I found an old derelict house on the side of a golf course. We cut it into four and we put it on a truck. Then we bought some land in the middle of nowhere in northern California and we transported the house there and rebuilt it. We made the house more isolated, which worked for the story.

It was a painful film to make for me because there were echoes of my own life in it. It was about a breakup of a marriage, and the children in the story were quite close to my own children in age. *Shoot the Moon* was very, very close to my own life.

I had wonderful actors in Albert Finney and Diane Keaton, and the kids were pretty great in the film. The actual shooting of it was a real delight because it was so controlled. And yet, emotionally, it was probably the most difficult thing I did, because it kind of was like putting a little bit of yourself up there on the screen. And that's always the most difficult film to make.

Well, I always think that it's odd, because I did different things to begin with. I've continued to do different work. It always seems that I react against the film I just finished in order to do the new film. It makes it difficult. It makes the choosing of the films that much more difficult each time, which is a drag, because you don't want to get too precious about it. Making a film these days takes at least two years of your life. So, you've got to be sure that

you're right. And sometimes you're not, you know. I really try to do different work. I think that by doing different work each time, it keeps you creatively fresher. And so, I always try to look for things, so you're not really in the area where everybody else is at the moment. That doesn't make you very popular with studios. But *Shoot the Moon* does, because obviously sometimes you do things which are not really very fashionable. And I think that I feel very strongly that I have to find an audience. I don't make films for, you know, eight people in a cinema. But, by the same token, I do feel that film has a responsibility beyond entertainment. I just think that if you can entertain an audience and also if it has an edge, if it has a point of view about a human condition, it's infinitely more important as a piece of work. And I think that combining those two, as I think a lot of great American cinema does, is the hardest thing to pull off.

Pink Floyd: The Wall (1982)

Bob Geldof; Christine Hargreaves; James Laurenson; Eleanor David; Bob Hoskins; David Bingham.

I was never meant to direct it. I was going to produce it. I was preparing to do *Shoot the Moon* when I first started working on *Pink Floyd*. It was an album that I particularly liked, and I thought it would make a really good film, and so I encouraged it to get it made. One thing led to another, and then everybody came to me and said, will you direct it? So, I ended up directing it. I hadn't really walked off it. I really wasn't very keen to do it and it was probably the most miserable experience of my life. I always say it's like my student film. It was the most expensive student film in history, probably. It was a most miserable experience, particularly working with Roger Waters, and it was the first and last time I ever did anything with a rock 'n' roll band. I think Roger's the only person in the world who actually knows what the film is all about. I'm sure most of us didn't. But from a creative point of view, from the point of view of using the camera and the whole cinematic ride, that's really what we were all about when we made it. I think that one shouldn't really be taken too seriously, with regards to the actual material within it. I think it's an interesting film, but I think it's pretentious to try to convince anyone that we intellectually knew what we were doing. Maybe Roger did. The rest of us just made it up as we went along.

Birdy (1984)

Matthew Modine; Nicolas Cage; John Harkins; Sandy Baron; Karen Young; Bruno Kirby; Nancy Fish; George Buck; Dolores Sage.

Birdy was sent to me originally as a screenplay. The writer had moved the original book from the Second World War to post-Vietnam. It was a really odd piece, and I suppose that's why I responded to it as being very different than anything I'd done before. It was very difficult to pull off, in that you're often inside the boy's mind. It's really a film about schizophrenia, although I always saw it very differently than that, you know. I think that it's an anti-war film and an odd one at that.

Matthew Modine and Nick Cage were two actors who hadn't really done a great deal at that point in time. It's interesting, because they both went about their jobs very differently. Matthew is quite instinctive. The hard thing for Matthew and the part he played was that he has to show his pain. At that point in his life, I don't know if he had had much personal pain, and therefore it was always hard to push him. Whereas Nick went about his job very much as an actor and really worked at it and put himself through a lot of physical pain. He had teeth taken out and he had his face bandaged up, and he would leave them on at night so that he would forget actually what his own face looked like. He really put himself through the hoop in order to play the part. Whereas, Matthew can be joking and then suddenly do a very emotional dramatic scene. I think that's the kind of actor that he is. So, they both approached the film very, very differently as actors.

To get inside Birdy's mind and the whole sense of imagined flight was going to be the most difficult thing to do. We originally were going to do it with Garret Brown, who invented the Steadycam. He had invented another new thing called the Skycam. Unfortunately, the thing wasn't really up and working when we got it. On the first couple of takes, it crashed into the ground. So the flight thing was actually done by a number of different means and made up of many, many different shots.

I like *Birdy* very much even though I think it's weird. But I identified with the two main characters because it wasn't that dissimilar from North London where I grew up. I really had a great fondness for those two characters, because I had two young actors who were giving their all for it.

Angel Heart (1987)

Mickey Rourke; Robert De Niro; Lisa Bonet; Charlotte Rampling; Stocker Fontelieu; Michael Higgins; Brownie McGhee.

I was given this novel—I think it was called *Fallen Angel*—and I renamed it *Angel Heart* when I did my script. On the inside flap of the book it said RAYMOND CHANDLER MEETS *THE EXORCIST,* and I thought, Wow—it really was a fusion of two genres. It's called a Faustian tale, and yet it's this great noir detective story. Mixing those two together to do something in the area of the supernatural and yet do it straight was interesting to me. Do it as if it was a straightforward gumshoe film, and within that, it allowed me a whole area that we could explore with regards to things happening inside his head. That was the real challenge to the whole piece.

Originally it was set all in New York. When I wrote the screenplay I set part of it in New York, and then I moved it to New Orleans and that gave it another depth. I always thought that at that point no one really knew about that world, New Orleans. It's like you suddenly realized that the kind of New Orleans that you thought you knew actually didn't exist, so you have to recreate it and that was kind of interesting to do.

Ever since I made *Midnight Express,* I've been very conscious of self-censorship. I wrote this scene where the room suddenly is raining blood. It's something that you begin to think, well it could look really silly, you know. That scene originally got an X rating in the United States because of the sexual content. They're making love, and it's raining blood, and it was a combination of violence and sex that possibly took it over the edge, as far as the censors were concerned. In the end, I cut out a small amount of footage of Mickey Rourke's backside. I cut it out and suddenly it's not an X anymore, which is rather silly. It was before the new ratings system was put in place, and in those days, an X meant that very few cinemas would actually run it, which kind of defeats the purpose of making the movie in the first place.

Working with Mickey Rourke and Robert De Niro was really interesting, because I think that Mickey really saw it as a prizefight. To him it wasn't about acting out the scene. I think that De Niro looked at it totally differently. When the two of them were together in a scene, I would always use two cameras, because they would improvise. I wanted to be careful that if one was

improvising, then the other would be able to go with him, and I would never be able to replicate that again if you were doing it in a single-camera situation. Mickey would go off on a tangent and then you'd think, what on earth? Getting it back to the original scenes that I wrote was always difficult. I think Mickey is a very, very good actor and is very good in *Angel Heart*. I think that his scenes with De Niro are where he's at his best, because I think it was just working with De Niro that pushed Mickey much, much further than he might have gone. He really didn't like acting very much, and I think working with De Niro made him want to win. As I say, it was a bit like a prizefight to him—it wasn't about acting.

Mississippi Burning (1988)

Gene Hackman; Willem Dafoe; Frances McDormand; Brad Dourif; R. Lee Ermey; Gailard Sartain; Pruitt Taylor Vince; Stephen Tobolowsky; Michael Rooker.

Mississippi Burning was sent to me as a script, and I was rather intrigued by it. I must say that I was pretty ignorant of the actual true story on which it was based until I'd read the script. The more I went into the real story the more I realized how important it was.

The original screenplay was really much more of an FBI detective story. I tried to push it much, much closer to the political story that I really wanted to make. Of course you can never satisfy everybody and it could never be the definitive story of a black in the civil rights struggle. But I really wanted the political aspect to be much more evident than it was in the original screenplay.

The civil rights struggle obviously touched everybody's lives in some small way, whatever age you might be. So I approached it the same way as anybody would, in that you have to do your homework and you try to immerse yourself into as much information about the period as you can. After all, it was very well documented and therefore it was not difficult to get inside of it. Therefore, our job was to replicate that information on film.

Working with Gene Hackman was an absolute pleasure. I remember him as probably the most professional actor I've ever worked with. I think he really understands how to cut to the absolute heart of a scene. It makes your life very easy as a director. There's no way you're going to pull the wool over his eyes and get him to do something that he doesn't want to do. That some-

times can be difficult for a director. He has that rare ability to be a powerful actor—never contrived, never phony, always real and always minimal. The ability to do that is very rare among movie stars.

Come See the Paradise (1990)

Dennis Quaid; Tamlyn Tomita; Sab Shimono; Stan Egi; Shizuko Hoshi; Ronald Yamamoto; Akemi Nishino; Naomi Nakano; Brady Tsurutani; Pruitt Taylor Vince; Colm Meaney.

With *Mississippi Burning,* I wanted to make a film about racism, and I felt like there was more to say—or maybe I felt that I hadn't really quite achieved what I wanted to do in *Mississippi Burning*. For many years, on a wall in my office, I had this incredible photograph of an old Japanese-American man, with his two grandchildren sitting on a suitcase. The photo was about the plight of Japanese-Americans during the Second World War. I looked at the photo and wondered what might be the story behind it. So I researched what had happened to the Japanese-Americans during the Second World War and their internment. Out of that, I thought I would write a personal story—an interracial love story—but set it against the internment of Japanese-Americans, which was really another form of racism. All of that came from this one photograph.

I think that *Come See the Paradise* was embraced by Japanese-Americans in ways that *Mississippi Burning* was not embraced by black Americans. I think that, in that regard, I did achieve what I wanted to achieve by making another film on racism. In the end, it's a love story, and I don't think that's an insignificant factor. Some people have said, well, the actual background was more important than the actual personal story. Well, not to me, it wasn't.

It was not one of the most successful of my films, but it's a film that I'm very proud of. It's always difficult to know why films succeed and why they don't. I mean, if anybody knew what the secret was, obviously a lot of people other than me would be very rich. But I don't really know what makes a successful film. Sometimes you find an audience, and sometimes you don't. It was probably a period in American history where the main audience didn't really want to be reminded of it. I don't know.

You set out with a blank piece of paper and you write the screenplay and you persuade someone to give you the money to make the film, and then you

go through the whole nightmare of putting a film like this together—it's very difficult. When you come out at the end of it and you hope it is half as good as you originally intended, then, you know, that's some success. In the end, as I said, I am very proud of that film.

> *It's the variety of his work that sort of staggers me. He can go from* Evita *to* Angela's Ashes. *When Alan starts a project, it's going to be something very interesting and completely out of left field.*
>
> *Colm Meaney—Actor*

The Commitments (1991)

Robert Arkins; Michael Aherne; Angelina Ball; Maria Doyle Kennedy; Dave Finnegan; Colm Meaney.

Well, I was filming *Come See the Paradise,* and two friends of mine came to me with a book written by Roddy Doyle. It was a very easy read. It was about a quarter of an inch thick, and it was all dialogue—my kind of book. I remember reading it and laughing out loud, and if I am laughing out loud, then there should be a wonderful film to be done here.

I'd just done two very serious films with *Mississippi Burning* and *Come See the Paradise.* I thought that I would like to do something that's a bit funnier and irreverent, and this seemed to fit the bill. It wasn't a very big or expensive film to do, so there was not a lot of pressure on me. I had to find young people who could be good musically. It was by far and away the most enjoyable film I ever made. It was a pleasure to get up in the morning and go to work, which is not always the feeling you get when you're making a movie.

In Dublin, every pub I visited had a band playing, sometimes good, sometimes terrible. It's just part of Irish life that everyone seems to have the right to actually sing a song or play a musical instrument, and that's wonderful. We set up open-call auditions where we had one band after another come in. We saw dozens and dozens and dozens of bands and musicians. They weren't always good, and they weren't always rock 'n' roll, but it was a pleasure. In Dublin, it ceases to be a job or work.

I decided very early on in *The Commitments* that I didn't want to cheat on the music. If someone was playing a musical instrument, they ought to know how to really play. If they were going to sing, they should be really able to sing. Every time I would do an audition for a rock 'n' roll band, I read every-

body in the band, even if they were terrible, so that they were really comfortable with the music part of it. I cast everybody to be very close to the character that they play in the film. They're not really playing outside of who they are as people.

I like *The Commitments* because I enjoyed doing it. If it turned out to be a really rotten film, it wouldn't have mattered as much to me, because I had such a good time doing it. But I think it's nice for what it is, and I think that a lot of people have tried to copy it—perhaps not satisfactorily. It has vitality and energy and honesty, and I think it's quite a raw film. I was trying to be unpretentious as I possibly could be as an artist in doing it. The fact that I enjoyed doing it so much . . . I think it does have a good spirit. That spirit comes from the kids themselves and hopefully that shows up on the screen.

> *He's cynical. Alan has an interesting take on life. Everything is either going to be a calamity or a disaster. It's always been like that. But I like his cynicism. It's kind of British cynicism, which is dark and humorous, and I like that.*
>
> *Anthony Hopkins—Actor*

The Road to Wellville (1994)

Anthony Hopkins; Bridget Fonda; Matthew Broderick; John Cusack; Dana Carvey; Michael Lerner; Colm Meaney; John Neville; Lara Flynn Boyle.

I made *Mississippi Burning*, *Come See the Paradise*, and *The Commitments* one after the other without a break in between. I really didn't want to rush into another film—that's always very dangerous, because once that gap gets too wide, you get terrified if you don't have another film set. So I took a long time off before the book about Dr. Kellogg came to me. This place in Battle Creek, Michigan, run by Dr. Kellogg was kind of weird, crazy, and amazing. It's an odd film, because it's slightly larger than life and it's funny. Tony Hopkins really was the pivot of the whole film, and his take on the character he played is from him. He revved it up to slightly larger than life.

I have to tell you the story about how those teeth of his came about in the film. He was in a hotel room somewhere watching TV, and a Bugs Bunny cartoon was playing and he noticed Bugs's large front teeth. In that moment Tony saw the one prop that would help create his wacky character. So we have the teeth to thank or blame.

What I really like about his movies is the visual aspect of them. I think he is brilliant with that.

Antonio Banderas—Actor

Evita (1996)

Madonna; Antonio Banderas; Jonathan Pryce; Jimmy Nail; Victoria Sus; Julian Littman; Olga Merediz; Laura Pallas; Julia Worsley; María Luján Hidalgo.

I was first asked to do *Evita* twenty-odd years ago by Robert Stigwood. I had just finished *Fame,* and I went to the opening of *Evita* on Broadway, and he wanted me to do it then. Because I'd just done *Fame,* I didn't want to do another film immediately, so I said no, I didn't want to do it. Then the project went through so many different kinds of lives. There must have been fifty people who were going to play *Evita,* and there were about thirty different directors involved in it at one time or another.

Finally, Andrew Vajna asked me to do it again, and it kind of just came at the right point in time. I thought I would have a go at it. I always loved it as a musical piece. I always loved the original album, which was how I first heard it, because the album came out before the stage show.

I think the film is quite a brave film in that it's an opera. It's a modern opera, and therefore, in order to communicate, you're communicating only with song. The emotional highest that you can ever get to ends with that which a person, an actor, can do by singing. There's a whole area of emotions that you can't even touch, because you can't use the spoken word. We made the decision very early on that it should be an opera. I wanted it to be an opera because that was the challenge to me—to be able to communicate with just music and images. And I think it's pretty emotional.

We took four months to do the music before we started shooting. We made all of our choices very early on in a recording studio, which is very difficult in that performances are set. It's set without any set around you and without any other actors. It's done in isolation, and then, suddenly, that becomes the yardstick, and you have to keep to that as a template because it's already been done in a recording studio. Then I've got to make the film around that. The sheer mechanics of it makes it that much more difficult to make as a film, because emotionally or dramatically, you can't go beyond what's already been done on recording. On the other hand, I think when

Evita's dying—that was pretty emotional and I think that Madonna did a good job there. I think that Madonna is very good in that.

We filmed in Argentina and they didn't really want us there, you know. We arrived and we had all these death threats, particularly to Madonna—mostly from the makeup people [*laughs*]. I'm joking, I'm joking. But it really was very dangerous being down there. We filmed two or three weeks there, and then we went to Budapest where we did all the big funeral scenes. We had four and a half-thousand people in period costume for that. Then we came back to Shepperton, where we finished. The only hard thing was the fact that we made two movies. One in a recording studio and one on a film set.

The actual historical truth of the piece is very difficult to determine. In Argentina, you know, Eva Peron is either a saint or she's a whore, and there seems to be no middle ground. In the end this is a woman who died very young from cancer, and therefore, it is important for us making the film to make her a heroine. A lot of people don't like that, because a lot of people disagree with who she was and what she did. In the film I think that it's pretty well balanced with the proviso that you do have to make certain decisions in order for the audience to enjoy the piece. You have to make her heroic in a way that perhaps some people would not agree with.

I liked how it turned out, and I thought Madonna, Antonio Banderas, and Jonathan Pryce were really, really good in it. As an experiment, it was always touch and go, quite frankly. It was quite difficult, and yet it is opera, and as opera, I think it's very successful.

Angela's Ashes (1999)

Emily Watson; Robert Carlyle; Joe Breen; Ciaran Owens; Michael Legge; Ronnie Masterson; Pauline McLynn; Liam Carney; Eanna MacLiam.

I had the publisher's proof of the book, and I made inquiries as to its availability. But the producers David Brown and Scott Rudin snapped it up very early. A year went by, and I saw that it had won the Pulitzer Prize and was suddenly number one on the bestseller list. Then, suddenly, out of the blue it came back to me again, and I thought that it was fate. The producers had a screenplay already written, but I went back to the book and then I did my version of the screenplay. Although the original screenplay was very good, the book contained a wealth of other material that I wanted to explore.

As I said before, I try to do different things because it keeps me creatively fresh. To do a film like *Angela's Ashes,* I suppose, was my reaction against a big film like *Evita*. With *Evita*, it seemed like every single day we had something like two thousand extras. So maybe I was ready again for a smaller film. The most difficult challenge for a director is two people in a room. So, although it seems like doing a big movie is that much more difficult than doing something that's more controlled, like *Angela's Ashes,* they're actually exactly the same when it comes to making a movie. In the end you still wake up at 6:00 in the morning, and you've still got to do the same job. It's exactly the same. Working with Madonna is one kind of challenge and working with a small child as in *Angela's Ashes* has its challenges, too.

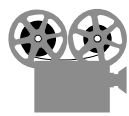
Whenever you're doing a period recreation, the research materials are usually black-and-white photographs. So, whenever you do period replication, you find yourself kind of taken away from primary colors. You can't do it in black-and-white, because it's too easy to do that, and probably the people giving you the money wouldn't approve. But you try and make it monochromatic when you're shooting it in color. What you do is open with a very narrow color pallet, insomuch as everybody working on the film is looking through the same color area. That's the costume designer, the art director, the production designer, and the cinematographer. You all have the same goal, so you get a monochromatic feel, even though it's in color. We also used the Technicolor process, which takes out a great deal of the color by retaining more of the silver, and in the final print you get this dense kind of feel. And all those things are relevant to try and give it a feel that will replicate the period. Each little thing works for itself, and that's the way that you retain the consistency.

In the case of *Angela's Ashes,* it was very difficult adapting the book, because even as I made the movie, it became more successful than it already was. Frank McCourt's colossal, successful book was successful everywhere around the world. To try and express that cinematically was to know we were always going to come off second best, you know. It's very hard, unless I'd made an eight-hour film. By the same token, there have been a lot of people who have seen the film who have never read the book. Therefore, it's an organic process, you know. It has to exist in its own world, and I have to make cinematic choices that are comparable with the literary ones. There are also those people who have read the book and will never be happy with the film. But there are many more millions of people who will see the film who never read that book—indeed, any book.

Fearless Alan

I never think of myself as fearless. I think I'm quite principled in what I do. I try to avoid the obvious movies. I've lived quite a charmed life, really, and I've been very, very fortunate to benefit from the American film industry. I've worked beneath that commercial umbrella. I've been able to do individual work, and I feel very strongly about finding an audience. Sometimes you do, sometimes you don't. You hope it will work, and you hope that it lasts a little longer than when the credits come up, when most people forget films. You hope that it at least lasts until they get out on the street.

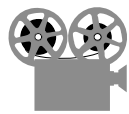
My mentor was the great director, Fred Zinnemann, whom I used to show all my films to until he died. He said something to me that I always try to keep in my head every time I decide on what film to do next. He told me that making a film was a great privilege, and you should never waste it. I think that's true. You have to pinch yourself every once in a while because you're so lucky to be allowed to make films. They should be a little more than just a piece of entertainment. Sometimes that's hard to pull off. Sometimes you do and sometimes you don't. It's a percentage game out there.



Alan Parker Filmography

Our Cissy (1974)
Footsteps (1974)
The Evacuees (TV, 1975)
Bugsy Malone (1976)
Midnight Express (1978)
Fame (1980)
Shoot the Moon (1982)
Pink Floyd: The Wall (1982)
Birdy (1984)
Angel Heart (1987)
Mississippi Burning (1988)
Come See the Paradise (1990)
The Road to Wellville (1994)

Evita (1996)
Angela's Ashes (1999)
The Life of David Gale (2002)



Awards and Nominations

Academy Awards, USA
Mississippi Burning, Best Director (nominated), 1989
Midnight Express, Best Director (nominated), 1979

Berlin International Film Festival
Mississippi Burning, Golden Berlin Bear (nominated), 1989

British Academy Awards
Evita, Best Adapted Screenplay (nominated, shared with Oliver Stone), 1979
The Commitments, Best Direction, 1992
The Commitments, Best Film (shared with Roger Randall-Carter and Lynda Myles), 1991
Mississippi Burning, Best Direction (nominated), 1990
Fame, Best Direction (nominated), 1981
Midnight Express, Best Direction, 1979
Bugsy Malone, Best Original Screenplay, 1977
Bugsy Malone, Best Direction (nominated), 1977

Cannes Film Festival
Come See the Paradise, Golden Palm (nominated), 1990
Birdy, Grand Prize of the Jury, 1985
Birdy, Golden Palm (nominated), 1985
Shoot the Moon, Golden Palm (nominated), 1982
Midnight Express, Golden Palm (nominated), 1978
Bugsy Malone, Golden Palm (nominated), 1976

Cinema Writers Circle Awards, Spain
CEC International Award, 2000

Golden Globe Awards
Evita, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1997
Mississippi Burning, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1989
Midnight Express, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1979

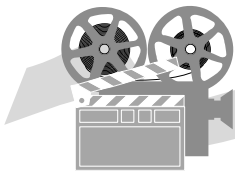
Golden Satellite Awards
Evita, Best Motion Picture—Comedy or Musical (shared with Robert Stigwood and Andrew C. Vajna), 1997

Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists
European Silver Ribbon, 1997

Karlovy Vary International Film Festival
Angela's Ashes, Audience Award, 2000

National Board of Review Awards
Mississippi Burning, Best Director, 1988

Tokyo International Film Festival
The Commitments, Best Director, 1991



8

The Films of Paul Schrader

A native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, writer-director Paul Schrader grew up in a strict Calvinistic environment, which restricted his access to motion pictures and other forms of entertainment. As a child, working in the film industry was the furthest thing from his mind. Eventually, of course, that all changed.

Schrader attended UCLA's film school and became a film critic for the *L.A. Free Press* and an editor for *Cinema* magazine. Schrader's first success as a screenwriter came with his screenplay for *The Yakuza*, directed by Sydney Pollack in 1974.

By the late 1970s, he had produced classic screenplays for director Martin Scorsese, including *Taxi Driver, Raging Bull,* and *The Last Temptation of Christ*. In 1977, Schrader made his directorial debut in the searing drama and social commentary, *Blue Collar*. *Affliction,* produced in 1999, proved to be his biggest commercial success, garnering various award nominations, including an Oscar for Best Director. Although not all his films have been favorably received, they continue to reflect his fascination with the human condition.

In talking with Schrader, you find out quickly that he is a very talented but complicated man, oftentimes seeing life from its darkest side. He seems to enjoy going there, exploring themes that no one else will. As a result, none of Schrader's films are simplistic, and they never fail to challenge the viewer on some level.

The Conversation

I am a product of the Christian Reform Church, which is a Dutch Calvinist, Protestant sect. That was in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The community was predominately—I would say, exclusively—Dutch. I went to West Side Christian growing up—it was a Christian high school—and eventually Calvin College, which is also a seminary. At that time, motion pictures were proscribed by decree against what they called the "worldly amusements," which included things like theater, dancing, card playing, drinking, smoking, and so forth. So, in fact, I grew up in a community that was movie-free. Didn't see a film until I was a bit older and I was able to sneak out—when I was, I don't know, maybe fifteen or so. I didn't feel particularly deprived, because no one I knew was seeing movies. It was outside the cultural loop. It was still possible at that time to have a kind of closed community, but television eventually came and completely destroyed that concept. That closed community no longer exists, even in Grand Rapids—or anywhere else, for that matter.

Looking back on it, I feel that it was a very, very gratuitous upbringing, because I was raised around essentially the world of ideas—because that's what religion is, or at least that type of Calvinism. And every Sunday after church all the uncles gathered at my grandmother's house to discuss the sermon. Understand, now, that these are farmers, and that was their world. And when I look at the world my children are growing up in—one hundred channels of television, video soccer as opposed to outdoor soccer, and the Web—I have to admit I had a pretty good upbringing.

I fell in love with movies in college. A lot of it had to do with the fact they were forbidden to me when I was younger. It was also the time of the intellectual cinema of Europe in the 1960s. So, I fell in love with Resnais, Bergman, Godard, and Truffaut. A filmmaker never forgets his first love, just like everyone else. And so, a lot of my subsequent work has come out of that first love.

I started a film society in college, and we were showing films on the sly. Then I needed to know more about films, so I spent a summer at Columbia University studying film. Fortuitously, that summer, by coincidence, I happened to meet the film critic Pauline Kael, who subsequently became my mentor. And, she said, "You know, you don't want to be a minister. You want

to be a film critic." When I graduated, she got me into UCLA film school, simply by her recommendation, because I really didn't have the credits to go. That was 1968, and things were much more freeform. It was sort of a wonderful time to be a film critic, because at that time you were part of the movement, you know. Everything was seen as part of the color culture.

I was under Pauline's tutelage. Pauline got me the job at the *L.A. Free Press* and I was set—that was going to be my course. I corresponded with her weekly and sent her my reviews. There was a whole group of us—we sort of called ourselves "The Paulettes." There had been generations of Paulettes over the years. But in my first group, there was myself, David Denby, Steve Farver, Gary Arnold, and Ebert was in there for a bit. I think without Pauline, I would have never ended up in the film business. That connection would have never been made. I'd probably be much wealthier, but I wouldn't have been in the film business.

I had written a book of theological aesthetics that was published by UCLA Press, and I had a film magazine I was editing, and I was doing criticism. Then I fell into a period of my life where nonfiction was not addressing certain personal needs. My marriage had broken up. I had been at the American Film Institute as a fellow the very first year they opened. But I'd had an argument with George Stevens, who was the head of AFI, so I left.

I was in debt, and I was wandering, and I fell into a very evil kind of black, transient space. It was about that time I started having pain in my stomach, and I went to the hospital and found out I had a bleeding ulcer. But while I was in the hospital, the metaphor with *Taxi Driver* occurred to me, and I realized that it was sort of what I was, in a way. I was this person in this steel box, floating around in the city. The city was not New York. The city was Los Angeles. And so, I wrote that script rather quickly. I wrote continuously while sleeping on the sofa at a place I was borrowing, because I didn't have a place of my own. Write, sleep, write, sleep. I wrote two drafts of that script in about ten days.

I left Los Angeles to regain my mental health. I drifted back to Michigan, and then to Montreal, to Maine. And then I was in North Carolina and I got a letter from my brother, who had gone off to Kyoto, Japan, to be a missionary and a teacher. His marriage had also collapsed, and he had taken to watching Japanese gangster movies, Yakuza films. He wrote me this long letter about the Yakuza genre. This was shortly after the Bruce Lee phenomenon, and I thought that this would be very commercial. A friend of a friend lent us some money, and we went to L.A. and wrote that script, and it sold for more than any script had sold at that time. All of a sudden, I was up and

running. Then, it was after that that I was able to get *Taxi Driver* together. So, *Taxi Driver* was the first one written. *The Yakuza* was the first one sold.

I seized on *Yakuza* and just wrote, wrote, wrote, and progressively moved forward. But while I was writing *Yakuza* I was also doing film criticism. I was interviewing Brian De Palma because I had just reviewed *Sisters,* and it turned out Brian played chess, so I started playing chess with him on a regular basis. He lived out at the beach, and I gave him *Taxi Driver* to read, and he gave it to Michael and Julia Phillips, who were living up the beach from him. He also gave it to Marty Scorsese, and they all wanted to make it, but it took another three years before anyone would finance that script.

Let's go back a bit. When I wrote *The Yakuza,* it was a strange and unique situation. It was the first script that I sold, and part of my deal was that I was to select the first three directors it was submitted to. The first one was Francis Coppola, who turned it down. Then it was Franklin Shafner, who also passed. And then I put in Nick Roeg's name. I knew Nick because I had done an article on *Performance*. I had put Nick on the cover of my film magazine, so I was sure Nick would take it, but he shocked me by not taking it. So, then it was up to the studio to pick the director, and they sent it to Sydney Pollack.

Bob Towne rewrote the script. I won't claim that the script was ruined. I think that's sort of a gimmick or an excuse that writers fall back on. But the original script was meant to be more of a hardcore gangster film. Then the rewrites started moving it toward a gangster love story. In the end, it never really defined which genre it was most comfortable with. I don't think Sidney was really that comfortable with doing a hardcore gangster film. He wanted to use Redford, and I was opposed to Redford, because he wasn't the right age to have been in World War II. Now, as great as Robert Mitchum was, I think that if Sydney had put Redford in there it probably would have been much more successful.

I think that writing is a lot of fun, because you're really in control, you know. Anything you want happens. But it's also quite lonely. With directing, you don't have the kind of freedom you have as writer, because you're restricted by weather and by budget and by the limitations of your cast and whatever. But directing is also communal, and it's wonderful to go out in the morning and have a hundred people there asking you what they should do that day. It's a real luxury to go back and forth between writing and directing. A lot of the films that I have directed are films that are very, very hard to finance, films that I've had to direct for essentially no money. I can then use my writing skills to supplement my income to allow me to keep making these films.

Blue Collar (1978)

Richard Pryor; Harvey Keitel; Yaphet Kotto; Ed Begley Jr.; Harry Bellaver; George Memmoli; Lucy Saroyan; Lane Smith; Cliff De Young.

Blue Collar was one of those legendary bad experiences. When it was all over, I thought, if that was what directing was, I didn't want any part of it. I had invited three bulls into a china shop and told each of them that they were the head bull. From maybe the third day on, there was virtually no day that was free of incident. By incident, I mean name-calling, physical fights, walking off the set, throwing objects—just about every kind of aggressive behavior. Of course, it was all sort of driven by Richard Pryor, because of his massive mood swings, you know. Once the set fell into those crazy rhythms of Richard, and then Harvey Keitel and Yaphet Kotto just fell in line, it was truly difficult.

Most of directing is on-the-job training. I really didn't feel comfortable directing until *American Gigolo*. I remember I hung around the set of a TV show for a while to see what everybody did. But, basically, what I did was hire a cinematographer and an assistant director who could make *Blue Collar* for me. I told my script supervisor that I was just going to try to concentrate on the story. I told her to make sure that I had the coverage and make sure that the camera is doing something and looks okay. I really didn't concern myself that much about the technical aspects of the film. You know, there are a lot of ghost directors out there. Anybody can direct. Anybody listening to me can direct. All you do is hire a certain photographer, certain AD, and they'll do that film for you. It won't have much of a personal stamp on it visually, but it will have a personal stamp in terms of the story as you've written it. So in *Blue Collar,* all I was trying to do was simply capture the story.

I put that film together the same way I put virtually every film together over the years. I'm putting together a film today—twenty-five years later—the same way I put that film together. Write a script, find an actor, find a little money, and find another actor, and blah, blah, blah. When I started doing more of that script, I would say it was a story about these three autoworkers, two black guys and a white guy. And back then, people would tell me to put in two white guys and a black guy because that was how it worked, you know. You had the token black guy. You didn't have a token white guy. I in-

sisted it would be more interesting if it were two black guys and one white guy, because then one of the black guys can be a bad guy, whereas if it's only one black guy, he has to be a good guy. That was kind of gutsy, making the black guy not such a goody-two-shoes, because back then you really had to make all your minorities one-dimensional. But in that film, Richard Pryor's performance was extraordinary.

Hardcore (1979)

George C. Scott; Peter Boyle; Season Hubley; Dick Sargent; Leonard Gaines; Dave Nichols; Gary Graham; Larry Block.

Hardcore was sort of revenge fantasy. I sort of wanted to make a film where my father was the revenge figure—to take somebody from my background, and that *is* my background, in *Hardcore*. It was shot in the First Reform Church, and it was shot in the factory I worked in. It was shot in my hometown. When George C. Scott talks about the tulip and then predestination, that's all my church doctrine. So, I tried to take a character like my father and put him in Los Angeles. It's really quite rudimentary in a basic, sort of Freudian way, you know. But, that's what it was.

It was thrilling working with George, because he is such a good actor. He works in a certain way, and you have to work that way. He will give you two takes. He'll give you a third, if there's an absolute need for it. With George, every take is going to be exactly like the take before. I had just finished working with Harvey Keitel, who liked going around fourteen takes. In the same film, Richard Pryor would burn out after about three takes.

George was a very strong personality, who was also an alcoholic. His agent warned us that we would lose about five days to alcoholism. We factored that into the budget, and we in fact lost about five days.

The most memorable story about George is we were shooting in the red-light district of San Francisco late on a Saturday night. I had a scene in a bar, and I had a number of shots looking into that bar. I only had one shot looking in the other direction—George walking in, saying two words, and exiting frame. I said to the AD, "What do we do? Do we do the meat, or do we clean up George?" And he said, "Well, we should do the meat." That was a mistake, because that left George in his trailer on Saturday night for three or four hours. By the time we turn the lights around and send for George, he won't come out of his trailer. We called the producers, and they couldn't get

him out. So, I go over there, and George is sitting in his underwear and he has a bottle of vodka next to him. The first thing he says to me is, "This movie is a piece of shit." I said, "Well, George, sometimes you're making a film, and you run into a period where you're no longer certain about it. But then, when it's all over and it's put together, it turns out all right." He said, "No. No. No. I've made a lot of films. This is a piece of shit. You're a good writer but can't direct. This is just terrible." I said, "You know, George, we're in San Francisco; Monday we'll be shooting in San Diego. But we're all set up for the lights. All you have to do is put on your wardrobe, walk in there saying these two words, and then you can go home. If you don't do that, that means we have to come back here Monday night. That means we go to San Diego on Wednesday. That means you're on this film two days longer, if you don't just go out and say those two words." That sort of got to him, you know, to tell him he would be on the film two days longer. So he said to me, "Okay. I'll come out on one condition. You must promise me that you will never direct a motion picture again." I got on my hands and knees in his trailer and I said, "Mr. Scott, you're right. I'm a very good writer. I'm a very bad director. I promise you, here and now, I will never direct again." He slapped me on the shoulder and said, "Good. Good. Good. Okay. Let's go do that shot." And with that he went out and did the shot. That was George.

I didn't have the weight, in terms of years and experience, to tell George about acting. His instincts are so on the mark, anyway—he directs himself. One day, actor Peter Boyle had to leave the set to go to the bathroom. I wanted one more take from George before we took our lunch break, because I knew he wouldn't give me another take after lunch. So, I said, "George, can you fly solo?" Well, he did a four-minute take without Boyle there feeding him his lines. Finally, Boyle comes back and says, "He's simply amazing. He doesn't need me. It doesn't matter what I do. His performance is exactly the same way whether I'm there or not."

It was always a big melodrama working with George, but it was worth it, because you were getting a performance. What's really painful is when you're having trouble with an actor and you're not getting the performance. As long as you're getting the performance, it's all worth it.

> *He's deeply concerned with the interior life of his characters. I think he identifies with all of them, male and female, and you see the richness of the characters in his pieces.*
>
> *Richard Gere—Actor*

American Gigolo (1980)

Richard Gere; Lauren Hutton; Hector Elizondo; Nina Van Pallandt; Bill Duke; Brian Davies; K. Callan; Tom Stewart; Patricia Carr.

Films often come to me as metaphors for a problem. The problem with *Taxi Driver* was loneliness, and the metaphor became the cab. That cab was the very symbol of loneliness, for example. I was teaching screenwriting at UCLA, and I was talking to my class about a character. Now, earlier that morning, I'd been with my analyst. I'd been talking about the inability to express love. I was saying to my class, "What does this guy do? Is he a salesman? Is he a banker? Is he a gigolo? What is he?" and it hit me right then. I said, "Oh, that's it, that's the metaphor." The inability to express love and the gigolo. Boom. There you go. That makes the metaphor alive. I mean, the metaphor makes the problem come alive. And so, that's when it hit me, and then it was just the matter of coming up with a story line.

Casting the lead was tricky, because it had been Travolta up until about ten days before shooting, but John dropped out at the last minute. On the other hand, Travolta had broken his contract and I could enjoin Travolta, so I had that card to play. I managed to talk Richard Gere into doing it on a Sunday, and I contacted studio boss Barry Diller, and Monday morning we went forward with a new actor.

It was sort of ironic. In all, three main actors dropped out of the movie, were replaced, and each of the replacements became stars because of it.

Cat People (1982)

Nastassja Kinski; Malcolm McDowell; John Heard; Annette O'Toole; Ruby Dee; Ed Begley, Jr.; Frankie Faison; Ron Diamond; Lynn Lowry; John Larroquette.

After *Gigolo,* I thought it would be kind of interesting to do something that wasn't personal, that wasn't from me. Do something that somebody else had created and somebody else wanted to make. I was offered *Cat People*, which was a big studio film with a big budget. But it turned out, of course, that the film was as personal or more personal than any of the other films. But the original thought had been to do something that wasn't that personal.

I kept rewriting it, and I ended up getting involved with Nastassja, and

the film became about the whole melodrama of my relationship with her. In the original ending of the script, they killed the monster. Then I rewrote it so they didn't kill the monster but, in fact, fucked the monster and put her in a shrine.

Those Darn Animals

Animals are always easy to work with, because you can't make them work, you know. If an animal doesn't want to work, that's that. You don't have to go to the trailer and talk them out of the trailer or call their agent. You just do something else. On this film, I think we had three cougars dyed black. Each trainer had each cougar do a different thing, and they had two actual panthers that couldn't really be trained at all, they were just wild. Panthers are arboreal and nocturnal, so they're very hard to shoot a movie with, because they live in trees at night. How do you get them to work on a set full of lights and people, you know? They become catatonic rather quickly.

When you're using a real panther, you have to find ways to aggravate them so they don't become catatonic, and usually you do that with a little whistling sound. You have little air holes, which creates a high-pitched sound that drives them crazy. That's how it's done.

I kind of liked that film, because it's quite perverse. Jerry Bruckheimer, who produced it, and I, we went to the first screening in Westwood, here in California. At the end of the movie, when he's tying her to the bed and she was going to become a panther while they make love, and David Bowie is singing this sort of religious chant—well, there are two teenage girls sitting in front of us. One of them turned to the other and went, "Oh, my God." I turned to Jerry and I said, "I think maybe we went a little too far." It is rather perverse and it does go a little too far. The Germans liked it. It was very successful in Germany.

Mishima (1985)

Ken Ogata; Masayuki Shionoya; Hiroshi Mikami; Junya Fukuda; Shigeto Tachihara; Junkichi Orimoto.

I remember the moment I decided to make a film about Mishima. Someone was interviewing me about *Taxi Driver,* and they questioned me about writing about someone less intelligent and I said, "Well, this pathology of suicidal glory is not limited to the ignorant." And they said, "Well, name someone

more intelligent." And I said, "Well, Yukio Mishima. Here's someone at the opposite end of the bookcase, intelligent, Oriental, very successful, famous, yet in the grips of the same pathology."

I had been very interested at that time in my life in suicide and fantasies of suicide, and so I saw this as the opposite end. It was a way to write about the need for suicidal glory from the intellectual point of view and from the non-Western point of view. I became quite obsessed with doing that. It certainly changed my life, because when I went off to Japan for a year and made the film, my daughter was born there.

When I returned, the film industry had changed, and attitudes towards me had changed. It was sort of the feeling that, "We always knew he wasn't one of us, and now he's gone and made a film in Japanese, so now we know for sure he isn't one of us." That marked the end of my studio career. Ever since then all the films I've made have been independent. The studio was no longer making the types of films I was interested in. At least they weren't letting me make them. I had to continue on, but I had to raise money independently.

Back to *Mishima*, which was a very complex structure. It's four phases of life with three structural bricks laid on top of it. It's like a puzzle box of a movie. It's very unique. There's never been a movie like it, and it's very intellectual. You have to watch it in a very thoughtful way, the same way you would read a serious book about ideas. Maybe it's good that it's in subtitles: it makes you really pay attention, because you have to read everything. It is a wonderful film, and then I certainly am very, very proud of it.

There were three styles in that film. One was the last day, which was done cinema vérité. Then there was the past, which was done black-and-white, in the old style of Japanese films. Then there were excerpts from his novels, which were done on theatrical sets, and of the three novel excerpts, each novel was then color-coded. The first novel was gold and green. The second one was pink and gray, and the third one was black and "shu," which is a kind of orange color you see in temples. It's just grids upon grids.

Sometime during the shooting of it, I realized they would never be showing it in Japan. So, here I had a film that was being financed by the Japanese who would claim they weren't financing it, and its release in Japan was going to be blocked for political reasons. I was making a film that was financed by no one and was going to be seen by no one. Therefore, I was responsible to no one, and I found that, in a way, more daunting. You see, as a director, you use the fact that somebody else is paying the bills to cover up your own cow-

ardice. You end up saying something like "Yeah, we took the easy way out. But look, we had to sell some tickets and the studio wanted me to do that." Well, here I had a situation where there was no studio and there was no easy way out. There was no audience. So, the criteria I had to meet were my own, and that was exciting.

Light of Day (1987)

Michael J. Fox; Gena Rowlands; Joan Jett; Michael McKean; Thomas G. Waites; Cherry Jones.

Light of Day combined a couple of interests of mine: It's a rock 'n' roll movie, as well as a movie about the death of my mother. There's some very good stuff in it, but I don't think it really worked. I think that the most humbling experience you can have as a director is when you screw up your own material, because it's always so easy to say, you know, I wrote this, and the director made a botch of it. But when you write it and you direct it and you make a botch of it, then you realize how the whole process works. There are no assurances, you know. You can have a good script and a good actor and a good situation and it can still go wrong. It's definitely not a science.

The script was originally called *Born in the USA,* and I gave it to Bruce Springsteen, because I wanted him to play the role. He was flirting with being in the movies at that time, but he eventually decided not to do it. Now, I'm living in Tokyo, and I go to a record store, and I see this album called *Born in the USA,* and I buy it and look at the jacket credits, and he's actually thanking me. I'm wondering what's going on here. Bruce called me up, and he said, "You know, Paul, I never read that script. It was lying on my coffee table for about three months, and every time I walked past I saw "Born in the USA," and eventually it stuck in my head. Look, if you want that song, you can have it for your movie. Or, you can have a new song. I'll write you a new one." And so, since "Born in the USA" was so worked over, I said, "Well, why don't you write me a new one?" That's when he wrote "Light of Day."

I think one of the things that sort of killed the film in the end is that the Michael J. Fox and Joan Jett chemistry was just not right. It was complicated as to how that casting came to be. Just before I started the movie, I started to feel bad about that casting. I said to my agent that I didn't think it was right. It didn't feel right to me anymore, even though I had done it. I began wondering if I should make the movie. My agent told me that if I

didn't make the movie, how would I ever know if I was right or not? He had me there, so I made the movie.

Patty Hearst (1988)

Natasha Richardson; William Forsythe; Ving Rhames; Frances Fisher; Jodi Long; Olivia Barash; Dana Delany.

You go through periods where you don't have any ideas. Or you go through periods where the things you want to make you can't get financed. On a number of occasions, I've been offered scripts that no one else would do, one being this Patty Hearst script they wanted to make. No one else would do it, so they offered it to me. As soon as I read it, I realized why no one wanted to do it. The first forty-five minutes take place in a closet. All of the other directors it was offered to questioned how you shoot forty-five minutes in a closet. But I thought, wait a second, if she's in a closet for forty-five minutes and she's blindfolded, she doesn't know anything about reality. The only reality is what's she's imagining. So, for the first forty-five minutes, I could show whatever she imagines. I can imagine the world. That's so exciting. Then, the moment she comes out of the closet, it becomes less interesting, because then it becomes real again, and it becomes a movie of the week. But as long as she's imagining everything, it's kind of exciting. Anyway, that's how I saw it.

> *Paul Schrader is probably one of if not the most intellectual of all the American directors in the tradition that is more European, in that he sees the whole story that he's telling as a grand metaphor of something else.*
>
> *Eric Bogosian—Writer-Actor*

The Comfort of Strangers (1990)

Christopher Walken; Rupert Everett; Natasha Richardson; Helen Mirren; Manfredi Aliquo; David Ford; Daniel Franco.

With *Comfort of Strangers,* it was a situation where another director backed out, in this case John Schlesinger, who was afraid of the material. I read the script and just loved it. It was based on Ian McEwan's novel, and the mate-

rial was kind of perverse. I could see where those elements might scare another director off, but they really didn't bother me.

I've certainly paid the price, in terms of my career, for some of the choices I've made. I've taken scripts on that nobody else wanted to direct because they thought the films would flop, and then I would come along and do them. But no matter how good a film turns out, if it doesn't find a market, it doesn't help your career at all. On the other hand, it makes for some very interesting films.

I loved *Comfort of Strangers,* and I think it's a terrific film. It is sort of dark and perverse and intellectual and, therefore, its market is really quite limited. But should I have not made it because of that? John Schlesinger went off and made *Pacific Heights* instead. Should John have made *The Comfort of Strangers* and not *Pacific Heights?* I don't know. I mean, these are the things that determine your career. But, you know, at the time, at that moment, those decisions always seem clear, don't they?

On Writing

I feel pretty equal about my original material, as well as material that is not. *Cat People,* which I didn't originate as a writer, I feel very personal about. *The Comfort of Strangers* was very personal and *Light of Day* even more. *Light Sleeper,* which I wrote, I feel extremely close to. I feel *Affliction* is probably more Russell Banks than me. There is no simple answer. Every film has its own equation of autobiographical elements and personal feeling.

I become one of the writers on someone else's script by the time I directed anything, because I've mucked around for months in the screenplay and it sort of becomes mine, you know.

On Casting

You have your wish list, and then the financiers have their wish list. And so you go through the names. But in the end, you have to say you won't make the film with actors you don't think will work. It's a hard thing, particularly after you've spent years trying to get something made. Finally, you get to make it, only you get to make it with the wrong actor. Do you have enough guts to say, "No, I'm just not going to make it. I'm sorry, but I've spent three years trying to make the film, I have the money now, but I got the wrong horse, you know. And so I'm not going to ride." That's a hard, hard decision to make. Usually what you do is go make the film anyway, and hope that you were wrong about the casting.

Light Sleeper (1991)

Willem Dafoe; Susan Sarandon; Dana Delany; David Clennon; Mary Beth Hurt; Victor Garber; Jane Adams; Paul Jabara.

Light Sleeper is kind of a continuation of the *Taxi Driver* character. This guy who sort of drifts around, peeps into other people's lives, and doesn't have a life of his own. He wants to get a life, but doesn't know how to. In *Taxi Driver,* he was in the front seat and he was very angry. In *Light Sleeper,* he was in the back seat, and he's very anxious. But it's just a continuation of this character as I live it.

Witch Hunt (1994)

Dennis Hopper; Penelope Ann Miller; Eric Bogosian; Sheryl Lee Ralph; Julian Sands; Valerie Mahaffey; John Epperson; Debi Mazar.

Witch Hunt came about out of frustration. I was trying to finance *Affliction,* and it had fallen through yet another time, and I was just desperate to work. I got a phone call from HBO, who asked if I'd like to do it. They told me it was a go and to not worry about casting or the budget. Some of these things take years of agonizing over raising $50,000 here and $500,000 there and getting this cast and that cast. It was just an opportunity to work and an opportunity to do something less serious. So, I just kind of kicked back and did something whimsical. I look back at it now and think that was sort of a wasted year. On the other hand, if I hadn't done that project that year, I wouldn't have done anything else. Who knows?

Touch (1997)

LL Cool J; Gina Gershon; Conchata Ferrell; John Doe; Christopher Walken; Skeet Ulrich; Maria Celedonio; Anthony Zerbe; Chris Hogan.

I'm a big fan of Elmore Leonard's writing, and I've been trying to get my hands on something of his for a long time. *Touch* is actually the only Elmore Leonard book that didn't do well financially. It was one of the most atypical

of his books, because it's about a stigmatic. But once again, it was one of those situations where nobody wanted to do it, but, of course, I said I would do it.

The reason the book was unsuccessful, and I think the reason the film was unsuccessful, was it mixed the sacred and profane enormously. You have all these characters running around telling dirty jokes, and at the same time, you have a guy bleeding from the five wounds of Christ. I thought well, that's kind of cool—all these scumbags and then this Christ figure in the middle, back and forth. But, when we started testing the movie, it became painfully clear that audiences were wondering that if this was a movie about a stigmatic, why were the characters telling all these dirty jokes? And if this is a comedy, what's that character doing there with bleeding hands? It didn't quite fit anywhere. Again, it's a situation that I found myself in over and over again where somebody says, "Well, that really won't work," and I say, "Well, let's do it anyway. Let's find out." Sometimes it does work out. No one thought that *Taxi Driver* could possibly work. No one thought that *Affliction* could possibly work.

Penny Marshall is an old friend of mine that I've known for many, many years. She once said to me, "Your problem is that you go right up to the line, and you look at the line, and then you step over it." Maybe if those alarms went off a little louder, I would have an easier time with my career, although I'm sure it wouldn't be as interesting.

Affliction (1997)

Nick Nolte; Sissy Spacek; James Coburn; Willem Dafoe; Mary Beth Hurt; Jim True; Marian Seldes; Holmes Osborne.

I picked that book up in a bookstore. I was grabbed by the first sentence and wanted to make it right off. I got the rights from Russell Banks, and we wrote the script. I sent the script to Nick Nolte, because he just seemed like that guy. He wanted to do it, but the problem at that time was he was making a lot of money, $5 million to $6 million a film. It took me quite a few years to wear him down, until finally his career changed, and he came around and agreed to do it for much less money. I went into preproduction on that film and I bankrolled it for every cent I had, which was about $400,000, before the money came through. The money came through like a week before we started shooting. If it hadn't come through, I would have been broke, but I

got my money back and it all worked out. Francis Coppola told me once, "If you pretend you're making a movie long enough and hard enough, somebody will agree with you and pay for it."

I've always been interested in characters that act against their own best interests, who can't quite figure out why. Their characters would have a great subconscious "software program" running that they don't know about, or they only vaguely know about. Here, you have a character that really wants to do the right thing. He wants to have a kind of organized life, but he can't do it because he has this bad programming running. That's the content of a lot of characters I've written. I love those characters.

Ironic movies wink at you and they nod to you and they say, "We know better, you know. This is only a movie. Don't take this too seriously. It's all a game." The irony is the style of our times. *Affliction* was very sincere, and it's right there. Its heart is on the sleeve.

> *If there's a film that he loved, he wants you to see it. If there's a director that you didn't know about, he wants you to know. There a certain sharing, and he does what he wants to do with his films. There is a real reaching out to the audience.*
>
> *Gretchen Mol—Actress*

Forever Mine (1999)

Joseph Fiennes; Ray Liotta; Gretchen Mol; Vincent Laresca; Myk Watford.

Note: At the time of this interview, this film was about to be released in France, but because of differences with the distributor, it had not been released in the United States. Eventually, it premiered on the Starz! Cable Network. Schrader has very little to say about the making of the film.

Forever Mine is a big, obsessive love story. I wrote a script years ago called *Obsession*, for Brian De Palma. I wasn't completely happy with how that turned out. So, I thought I'd have a go at it myself. This is an obsessive love story that spans fifteen years, with multiple personality changes, with Joseph Fiennes and Gretchen Mol. It's a nice chick flick, but it's kind of dark, too.

A Changing World

I began with the film-school generation. That generation of people is now the seniors. We've moved from the exponential world to the ironic world, in

terms of storytelling. That's a pretty big change, and audiences have become much more cynical. The rate at which information is processed has become much faster. The movies that I first started out making all seem so slow now. They're all released now in the new world of DVD and commercials and video games. The information delivery system and the ability to process information have completely changed. People now watch things simultaneously. The level of social discourse has become coarsened both in the area of propriety and the area of seriousness. These are not very serious times and they are not very polite times. I'm not necessarily passing judgment on that, but it's just a fact of life.

What contributed to all of this was the studios became driven by corporate profit margins, more so than making good films. So, the independents are now making those films. Occasionally, the studios will reach out and distribute some of them. But the studio system, what's left of it, may be on its last legs, because all it really has left is distribution. Once broadband comes in, then your distribution will be gone, too. So, the studio system primarily packages big-budget films and plays them where there are multiple outlets. Some of it has allowed whole new financing structures to come into play.

When I first started making movies, there were probably only a dozen people around the world who were financing films. Today, there are maybe five hundred. If you are a scavenger, if you are a wolf-pack artist eating off the natural cadavers of equity financing, it's a good time, because you can try to cross the globe and rouse someone in Japan or in Germany. That's how it's changed. It does make the filmmaker, the artist, part of the financing team, which is a problem, because you're really out there spending half of your time raising money, and that's no fun. It's like a congressman who has to spend half of his time financing his next election rather than representing people. But that's the way it is.

The studio used to develop stories, create stars, finance movies, promote movies, distribute movies, and collect revenue. About all they do anymore is cofinance movies and distribute them and collect revenue, and now those things are under attack.

Parting Words

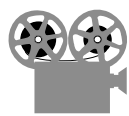
Maybe I'm sort of dark and cynical about it, but I figure once I'm dead, it's over. I don't much care much what people say or think of my films. Who's to care? What kind of legacy do you have from the grave? I think that making these interesting films and having people come up to you and say, "You

know, that meant something to me for this reason"—I guess that's why you do it. You do it for your own lifetime. Anybody who works for posterity is working for a very ungrateful client.

That's about it. I think I managed to squeeze in all of my little pet themes. Thanks.

Paul Schrader Filmography

Blue Collar (1978)
Hardcore (1979)
American Gigolo (1980)
Cat People (1982)
Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters (1985)
Light of Day (1987)
Patty Hearst (1988)
The Comfort of Strangers (1990)
Light Sleeper (1991)
Witch Hunt (TV, 1994)
Touch (1997)
Affliction (1997)
Forever Mine (1999)
Auto Focus (2002)
The Exorcist: The Beginning (2003)



Awards and Nominations

Berlin International Film Festival

Light Sleeper, Golden Berlin Bear (nominated), 1992

Hardcore, Golden Berlin Bear (nominated), 1979

Cannes Film Festival
Patty Hearst, Golden Palm (nominated), 1988
Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters, Golden Palm (nominated), 1985

Catalonian International Film Festival
Touch, Best Film (nominated), 1997

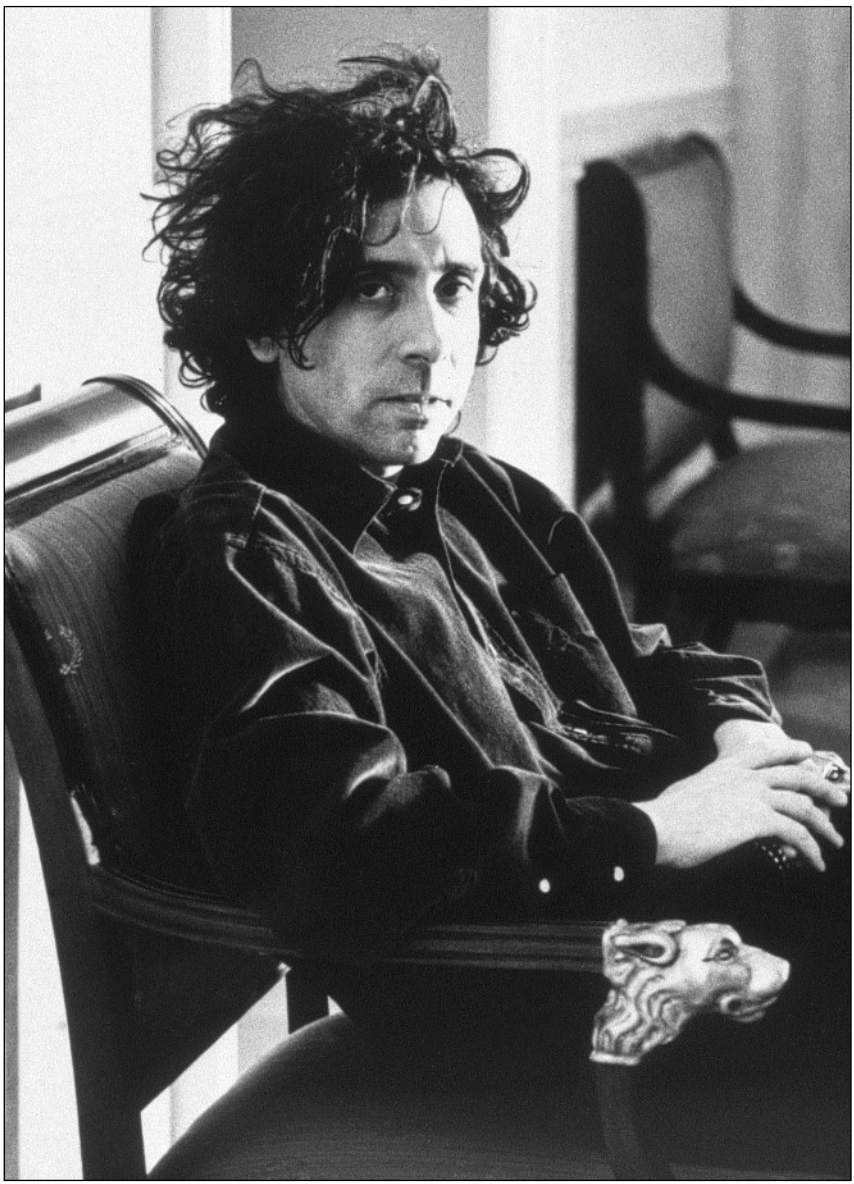
Deauville Film Festival
Light Sleeper, Critics Award (nominated), 1992

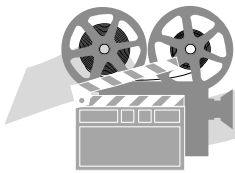
Independent Spirit Awards
Affliction, Best Director (nominated), 1999
Affliction, Best Screenplay (nominated), 1999
Touch, Best Director (nominated), 1998
Touch, Best Screenplay (nominated), 1998
Light Sleeper, Best Screenplay, 1993

Mystfest
Light Sleeper, Best Film (nominated), 1993

Valladolid International Film Festival
Affliction, Youth Jury Award Special Mention, 1997
Affliction, Golden Spike (nominated), 1997

Writers Guild of America
Laurel Award for Screen Writing Achievement, 1999





9

The Films of Tim Burton

Tim Burton created the highly imaginative and detailed worlds of *Pee-wee's Big Adventure, Beetlejuice, Batman, Edward Scissorhands, Batman Returns, Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas, Ed Wood, and Mars Attacks!,* as well as the 2001 release of *Planet of the Apes.*

Burton grew up in Burbank, California, where he fed his ravenous imagination by watching classic horror films and drawing cartoons. His artistic talent was formally recognized in the ninth grade, when he won a prize for a poster he designed for a local anti-litter campaign. His artwork adorned Burbank garbage trucks for an entire year.

Burton attended the Cal Arts Institute on a Disney fellowship, and soon after joined Walt Disney Studios as an animator. It was during these early years at Disney that Burton came up with the idea for *Tim Burton's Nightmare Before Christmas*, but the studio shelved the project for ten years until after the success of *Batman*. Burton gained experience early at Disney, working on such projects as *The Fox and the Hound* and *The Black Cauldron,* and made his directorial debut with the animated short *Vincent*, homage to one of Burton's childhood heroes. Drawn in dark, tilted tableaus, the film told the story of a young boy who wanted to be just like Vincent Price. Narrated by Price himself, the film was a critical success and won a number of awards, including two from the Chicago Film Festival.

> *He is one of the few people I know that doesn't have a choice. He is just an artist. It's more of a choice for other people. I don't think Tim Burton has a choice. He was born to be an artist.*
>
> *Michael Keaton—Actor*

The Conversation

Burbank was a funny place to me because it was very . . . you know, very middle-class suburban. But it's sort of right there in the middle of Hollywood, so to speak. There's Universal Studios, Warner Bros., and Disney, all right around there. Yet Burbank really felt like you could be in the Midwest or something. I mean, a lot of people who lived there didn't seem like they were in the movie industry. My parents weren't in the movie industry. So, even though it was there, it was very separate. I would often take the bus down to Hollywood Boulevard and walk the streets of Hollywood. I'd go to the magic shop or the poster-and-book shops down there. It was really, really great. Used to go on the Universal Studios tour before it became sort of a big event. You actually saw how movies were made. I always loved movies.

I always saw Burbank as a blank canvas, which was great, because I felt like I came from a real suburban middle class. But it's weird, because I never felt a strong cultural background there. I never felt a lot of emotional context. I don't know if it's just because there's basic suburban repression, or white, middle-class repression. I don't know what. But it was a place where I felt like it was sort of a blank canvas. I always liked drawing when I was a child, so I think coming from that environment sort of inspired me to kind of live more inside my own head and make things up. I always appreciated and enjoyed that time.

My parents told me that I used to watch horror movies before I could walk or talk. The odd thing was, I was never afraid of those films. I gravitated towards monsters and monster films, just because I think that's the power of movies. We all connect to different icons and actors and people and types of films, and for me it was monsters, for whatever reason. I responded to the fact that they don't seem like the most emotional characters in the film. That was the odd dynamic in it, and it first made me aware of perception. I think it's something I felt in my own life. I could see it with other people who like to categorize people—just how they perceive people and how they sort of put people in categories. How they'll judge a person by the way they look or

the way they act, and they think that's what the person is. It always made me kind of sad, somehow. I always felt like people have more aspects to their personality and character than just being one thing. I think in monster movies, you know, that these monsters look weird and look strange and yet they're not necessarily bad.

I started drawing from the very beginning. I've also been fascinated by that, because I think most children draw from the very beginning. I think that everybody draws, but at some point in your life somehow it gets beaten out of you. I remember when I was in kindergarten, all we used to do was draw. But then there was some kids that by the time they got to second or third grade, they said, "Ooh, I can't draw." Well, that was such an odd dynamic because somehow through their surroundings and society or certain teachers would say, "Well, no. You don't draw like this. You draw like that." I think it made some people lose a certain artistic confidence that they had early on in life. I remember going through that myself by the time I went to Cal Arts. I was very frustrated, because I said, "Oh, well, I can't draw. You know, I can't draw a human being."

When I worked at Disney I would draw a fox and it would look like a car had hit it, you know. I felt like I wasn't really good at drawing, in a certain way. Then something happened to me. I sort of opened myself up and said, "Well, I don't care, you know. I love drawing." It was like a mind-expanding experience. I remember sitting at the Farmers Market, sketching and being frustrated and then thinking, "I don't care. I'm just going to draw a person the way I see it." From that moment on, I just felt completely different and lifted and free and open and no longer cared about what people thought. I just enjoyed it. Early on I wasn't really a communicative person but I felt drawing was a good way to communicate. You could just draw something and show it to somebody and that was a way of communicating. I kind of used that in lieu of speaking, you know.

I started making films when I was young, just because I loved films. Then, if I had a big assignment at school like a book report, I'd do it in a little film. I remember doing a little film on Houdini. I just shot it in black-and-white, a little three-minute film. I got an "A" and I didn't have to write this twenty-page report. I don't even think I read the book. I found it was quite an easy way to get good grades without doing much, and having fun while doing it. But in my mind I never made the decision to actually become a filmmaker. I just lucked into it. I always felt quite grateful that,

even though I knew I wanted to be creative, in my mind it manifested itself in different ways. It could be drawing or it could be film. It could be anything, as long as it satisfied that creative impulse. When I got into animation and I got the opportunity to do an actual film, it was magical. I think it was much more magical then if I had said, "I'm gonna be a filmmaker."

Along Came Disney

I was very lucky to go to Cal Arts when I did. They had started this Disney Fellowship program to train animators. Because up until that point, the people who had worked on *Snow White* were the same people who had been there from the very beginning. They didn't really have, you know, new people come in. So that's why, I think, they started this program to train animators, taught by some of the Disney artists. I think since it was the beginning of that program, they were handing out scholarships a little more loosely and I was very lucky to get in. It was a fairly expensive school, and I don't think I could have gone if I hadn't gotten scholarships.

It turned into a competition, in a way, because at the end of the year the people from Disney would come over and review the films. By the end of the third year, I got drafted to work at Disney. Although I was not really good at drawing in the Disney style, it ultimately helped me sort of mutate into other things in the film business.

When I went to Disney, they were in a real transition. Up until that point Disney was relying on the same things that they had always relied on. But there was a mentality that wanted to branch off and become more contemporary, like a real studio, in a way.

When I first worked on *Fox and the Hound*, it was difficult for me because I could not draw in the Disney style. It was very frustrating. I worked with a great animator by the name of Glen King. He helped me through a lot of it. But I was pretty miserable and, strangely enough, I think I was actually quite depressed at that time. I think what I learned there was how to sleep sitting up at my desk with a pencil in my hand. I was sleeping two hours in the morning, two hours at lunch, two hours in the afternoon, just sitting at my desk with my pencil. On top of that, I'd get a full night's sleep.

I was really very lucky, because they could see my other drawings and allowed me to get off of *Fox and the Hound* and work on *The Black Caldron*.

They just let me sit in a room and draw characters without anybody saying anything, just letting me do whatever I wanted. And so for months I did drawings of conceptual things, and it was great. They liked the stuff, but it wasn't Disney, I guess. I remember one of the producers coming up to me, and he made a graph. He said, "If this is Disney and this is you, we want it somewhere in here," and I realized well, that a pretty huge gap there. But during this odd period in the company's history, it afforded me the opportunity that I would not have gotten anywhere else. I got to do a couple of short films there.

His Fascination with Vincent Price

I first thought of *Vincent* as a children's book. I had done little storyboards and things like that. At the time I was doing other concepts for another project, which might have incorporated stop-motion animation, which is three-dimensional animation. They had liked my work and suggested I do the project, as sort of a test, as a way to test stop-motion animation for this other project.

I sent the story to Vincent Price, and it was amazing, because he responded. It was like my first encounter with somebody who had had a great impact on me because of his films. Anyway, I sent him the story and he called. The thing that amazed me about him was he had the ability of making you feel like he really got it. I felt from the very beginning that he understood the psychology of the piece. What an energy, to meet somebody that you've admired your whole life, and then see them reading your story.

What's a Frankenweenie?

Frankenweenie was another odd experience as to how it happened. I can't imagine it happening now. I did some of these other drawings that retold the story of Frankenstein with a dog. Disney was getting ready to do another release of *Pinocchio*. They said they would release *Pinocchio* along with *Frankenweenie* as a sort of double-bill. I'm amazed that I got to do this, you know. The only bad thing that happened is that it got a "PG" rating, and it freaked out everybody at Disney. I didn't know what was freaking everybody out, because there was no blood or real violence in it. Well, in the end they didn't release it, but at least I had a piece of film to show around.

I left Disney basically because I felt like I had run my course there. Again, having the opportunity to sit for a couple of years and draw was wonderful. I was very proud of *Vincent* and *Frankenweenie,* but they never got released, and I felt like, well, there's just an odd dynamic between Disney and me.

> *He brought a lot to the film. I mean visually, that film to me is really beautiful. I can't think of anyone else who would have done it as well as Tim Burton.*
>
> *Paul Reubens—Actor*

Pee-wee's Big Adventure (1985)

Paul Reubens; Elizabeth Daily; Mark Holton; Diane Salinger; Judd Omen; Irving Hellman; Monte Landis; Damon Martin.

Some people at Warner Bros. saw *Frankenweenie,* and they showed it to the producers of *Pee-wee's Big Adventure,* and they showed it to Paul Reubens, who played Pee-wee. They offered me *Pee-wee's Big Adventure,* and it was always amazing to me, because I remember very distinctly having much more difficulty getting a job as a busboy in a restaurant than getting that job. It was the easiest job I ever got.

I always felt that *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* was like a perfect first movie for me, because here was this established character. I responded to the character. You have an established character, how do you best support him in the world? I just sort of always approached it from a character point of view, trying to support him and say, Well, it's a movie—what kind of world, given our budget, can we do? We got to try all sorts of visual things. It was a very solid, wonderful script.

The good thing about first starting is you just don't know a lot and what you don't know doesn't hurt you, you know. It was like, Wow, this is great! I get to paint an elephant blue and pink. That's great. We were doing a $4-million picture, and across the way on another soundstage, they're doing multimillion-dollar movies on these big sets. But everybody was coming to see us, asking us what we were doing. It was great.

I felt lucky again because *Pee-wee's Big Adventure* was a successful movie,

but it wasn't like the most successful movie of all time, you know. It had some good reviews and it had some terrible reviews. But I had the luck of having it be successful, so I could go and maybe do something else. You have to remain passionate about what you're doing, and that's really all you can control.

> *When I saw* Beetlejuice, *I left the theater and asked myself, What kind of a guy would make a picture like that? Right then and there I decided I had to work with him.*
>
> *Martin Landau—Actor*

Beetlejuice (1988)

Michael Keaton; Alec Baldwin; Geena Davis; Annie McEnroe; Maurice Page; Hugo Stanger; Rachel Mittelman; Catherine O'Hara; Jeffrey Jones; Winona Ryder; Robert Goulet; Dick Cavett; and Sylvia Sydney.

After *Pee-wee's Big Adventure,* I got offered a lot of scripts that I just felt was standard Hollywood stuff. To this day, I have no idea what a good script really is. I mean, you either like something that you're passionate about or you don't. So, I just read a bunch of stuff that didn't interest me. Then I got the script for *Beetlejuice,* and it was amazing, because it was the exact opposite of everything else I had been offered. This script made no sense and it had no real story. So, that really intrigued me. I couldn't believe any studio wanted to make this movie, because it went against everything that they seem to be, you know, pushing at you.

I didn't really know Michael Keaton, and I hadn't really seen his films, so I met with him. Sometimes that's better, because you don't have any preconceptions, and when you do meet them you kind of then just get into that energy. Michael is brilliant, and, I mean, this guy is full of energy. Here is somebody who's just really funny and gets incredible energy doing improvisation. I'd just go over his house and we'd sit there and riff on things. He would come up with voices and stuff like that. It was a very creative process, and I was just amazed by his humor and energy and ability.

I once referred to the film as cheesy, because we didn't have that big of a budget. So, therefore, we might as well go for a certain spirit, you know. Sort of a spook-show kind of thing. I was to avoid putting these people in front of a blue screen and having them act in a void and all of that. I just wanted to avoid that. I wanted these people to interact with real things. That just seemed appropriate for that project. When you're working with a lot of good comedic actors, it's nice to give them something real to bounce off of. And it was a collaborative project; you know what I mean? It was a real back-and-forth exchange. I think at the end of the day, if you can't remember exactly who did what, then you've had a good collaboration.

Batman (1989)

Michael Keaton; Jack Nicholson; Kim Basinger; Robert Wuhl; Pat Hingle; Billy Dee Williams; Michael Gough; Jack Palance; Jerry Hall; Tracy Walter; Lee Wallace.

I got offered *Batman* after *Pee-wee* but it wasn't green-lit until actually the first weekend after *Beetlejuice* opened. Again, you get snippets of reality in the movie business. They want you to do it, it sounds like a good idea, they think you're really talented, but unless you're successful, they don't want to give you the green light—not just yet.

I wasn't necessarily a huge comic-book fan, but I was a big Batman fan, you know. Of any comic, I sort of thought, well, this is the one that I gravitate to most. The psychological profile of the characters and the depth of them interested me. I felt they had more depth than a lot of other characters in comic books, somehow.

One of the first studio notes I got was that what I wanted to do was too dark. I told them that I never see things as exactly dark. Life itself is made up of light and dark. I mean if you have just dark, it's no good. If you have just light, it's no good. So, if you have a little bit of light surrounded by dark, it just makes that light so much brighter to me. I don't know—I just have a different take on it, somehow.

I grew up with the TV series. I loved the TV series. But the point is not to remake the TV series. One of the things that I always liked about the origi-

nal comic was the color scheme. Comics are normally thought of as bright. Well, maybe not nowadays. But back then, *Batman* was the first comic that did seem to kind of use darker tones. Maybe that was part of the thing that gave the Batman comics more of a grounding, psychological depth and mystery to it that I found intriguing. I just always saw it as a way to present this material in a respectful way to its original tone.

The casting of *Batman* was interesting, because we first started out looking for more of what I would call traditional superhero type. As we were meeting people I kept thinking there's something really wrong with this, because it's not like Superman. Here's a guy who has to dress up like a bat, so if you've got a guy who looks like Arnold Schwarzenegger, who's got pointed ears like a bat, it's like, kind of absurd. A guy like that wouldn't need to do this. He could just go kick the crap out of somebody if he wanted to. He didn't need to hide behind a bat suit.

Then I started thinking about Michael Keaton, because he's like a coiled spring, you know. It's like I always thought I never want to get in a fight with Michael 'cause he'd probably beat the crap out of me, you know what I mean? He's got that kind of energy in his eyes. I thought, Here's a guy who you could see having to dress up like a bat, because he's not like this guy who's big and strong and this and that. I mean he *can* be strong. But here's a guy who would have to come up with something more to be imposing. That was what I thought the psychological makeup of Batman was—somebody who had to hide. Somebody who had to become something that he really wasn't. That's the point of the costume in a way. I just thought Michael was much better, because The Joker and some other parts were showier and they were all great, too. I appreciated Michael keeping a lid on it, because it gave it tension, which gave it a subtext, which I think made the thing feel more real and strong. I was always surprised that he didn't get a better response. The response wasn't as strong as I thought he really was.

The first *Batman* was the first really big movie I ever worked on. It was my first experience of getting into that kind of pressure and what happens as a result. It takes it all to another level. Something was starting to happen to me that hadn't happened on the first couple of films that I'd done, which is the element of surprise. Again, lucking into doing my first film and having it become successful. Then kind of lucking into another one and it being successful. And then, all of a sudden, the searchlights come

on, you know, and the beams come at you. Now there's an expectation, and then on a bigger film there's a heavier expectation. It's almost like, *This has to happen*. I was dealing with people and producers and things that I had never dealt with on that level, and so I think I was a bit more daunted by that.

The saving grace was being in England. I loved working over there, and I felt very much at home there. In fact, it was the first time in my life I felt very much at home, but I never quite understood why. Being away from Hollywood on a big movie in England, I was able to focus more on making the movie. So, that helped.

There was a lot of hoopla at that time in the *Wall Street Journal* about *Batman* fans thinking Michael Keaton was the wrong choice. They were saying that we were destroying *Batman* before it ever got started. But being in England, I was luckily away from all of that. We were just there making the movie. There were times when I felt it was a little out of my hands, so to speak, which I had never felt before.

In the end I feel proud of it and I enjoyed the people I worked with, especially the actors. Michael was great, and I felt Jack Nicholson was such a pleasure. I felt like he supported me big-time. To work with all these great actors on a bigger movie like this and having those big sets was great. When I was feeling low or depressed I would just walk back and look at the sets that were being constructed at Pinewood Studios and it just gave me an energy that I can't even describe.

> *Tim is unique as a director because Tim is unique as a person, and Tim is an artist. His vision is a very clear one.*
>
> *Martin Landau—Actor*

What Sequel?

I think part of the reason I didn't want to do a sequel is that I was still responding to the first one. When you finish these big films it's quite traumatic. I certainly don't want to get back into that. The other problem was that on the first film there wasn't this sort of franchise mentality at work yet. I didn't have to meet with fast-food executives beforehand, and I wasn't meeting with toy companies all that much. I was able to focus on the movie. But by the end of the first *Batman,* that franchise mentality was much more in place. So, I just was not intrigued by the idea of some-

thing bigger, where the expectation was greater and the insanity was greater.

It took me a little time, but I started getting interested in the characters on the second one—Catwoman and the Penguin—and remembering how much I liked the Batman character. I got into all of that again. But the second one was probably the hardest movie I've made so far.

Batman Returns (1992)

Michael Keaton; Danny DeVito; Michelle Pfeiffer; Christopher Walken; Michael Gough; Michael Murphy; Cristi Conaway; Andrew Bryniarski; Vincent Schiavelli; Jan Hooks; Paul Reubens.

I think I actually said that I felt most attached to the first *Batman.* But then I probably said that after the second one, too. When you're going through an experience like that, I almost have to discount almost anything I say right after a film, to some degree. I think the second *Batman* was certainly the hardest film I've worked on, and the most painful. There was a lot of personal stuff going on at the time and the expectation and the weight of the film was quite strong. My interest was just to make a good movie and to try to take this material and be true to it, but to also try and do something different with it.

As I said, the franchise mentality was a bit stronger by then. It was the first time in my life that I was screaming and getting upset on the set, which I'd never really done before. That was a tough one. That was a tough one. All those elements—water, real animals, penguins, and having to cool down the stages. The weight of it was quite strong. So, I probably said whatever I said right after I finished it. I actually like aspects of the second one better than the first, although you know, I never really like comparing. They're all your children, and it's like picking one favorite over another. I don't know.

I was quite impressed with Michelle Pfeiffer for several reasons. First of all, I've never worked with an actor or actress that put a live bird in their mouth, held it there for six seconds, and then let it fly away. It happened so quickly in the film that people think it's an effect or they don't even notice

it. But boy, talk about a weird feeling, and here is this great actress who did this. I was very impressed with that. She should have gotten a special award for that, I think.

I remember after the second *Batman* I was confronted by another contradiction. They have these press junkets where you talk to somebody every six minutes, right? I think now it's every four minutes. But, at the time, it was six minutes. One person would come in and go, "This movie was so much lighter than the first movie." The next person would come in and go, "I can't believe it. This movie is so much darker than the first movie." I was feeling crazy. How can one person come in and passionately say this is lighter, and then another person come in and passionately say darker? It's just such an odd thing. It was fascinating to me because it's like, Wow, what does this say about anything? What does this say about, again, perception? So, I was very confused by that.

There was something that made me not want to do a third one, which was a kind of a backlash. I remember hearing a lot about how the fast-food companies were very upset at how dark the film was and the film was upsetting people and children and whatever. And comments like "what's that black stuff coming out of the Penguin's mouth?" You know, that doesn't go well with Happy Meals. I think the vibe at the end of the day was that the film was darker and, therefore, going down a dark and ominous path. At one point, I considered doing a third one, until I heard that Warner Bros. had come out and said they didn't want me to do another one. I remember being in a meeting and thinking, Wait a minute, we're talking about this movie and you basically don't want me to do this. It was like, "You really don't want to do this kind of movie again, do you, Tim? Blah, blah, blah." They were actually trying to talk me out of it, you know. I realized that it was probably best not to go a bit further.

After doing two movies, I felt very close to the material. I felt like there were a lot of us that were instrumental in helping this movie become something, you know. So, I felt like, well, yeah, it's probably a good idea that I don't do this, but I still feel like I have something to offer. So, whoever's going to do it, I feel like maybe I can help, put my two cents in if they're interested. So, I was a producer on the next film, but I didn't really do anything. Obviously they wanted to go in a different direction. Joel Schumacher directed it, and he's a fine filmmaker. I didn't want to get in his way at all.

Edward Scissorhands (1990)

Johnny Depp; Winona Ryder; Dianne Wiest; Anthony Michael Hall; Kathy Baker; Robert Oliveri; Conchata Ferrell; Vincent Price; Caroline Aaron; Dick Anthony Williams; Alan Arkin.

I had a few projects that were kind of stewing around in me for a long time, and *Edward* was one of those. We developed a script and did a budget without any studio involvement. I think Warner Bros. passed on it, and then Fox decided to do it. So, it was another one of those projects that I was lucky with.

I didn't know Johnny Depp at all, and I hadn't seen any of his work. He seemed to me to be somebody who was very much near the dynamic of the Edward character. I saw this guy who seemed like he had a lot going on, but he looked a certain way, so people perceived him in a certain way. I think he suffered for it. There's a sadness, I think, that goes with that, because people look at you and they perceive who you are because of how you look. I detected in him that sort of sadness, that sort of melancholy that goes along with that. That quality very much mirrored who and what that character was in this film.

Having Vincent Price in the film, even though it was a small role, created energy for everyone working on the movie, and it set the tone for the film. Here's this guy going through this abstract torment and anguish and feeling alone. Here he is, and in such a simple, emotional role—and this being an important personal project for me, you know. Again, it's these kinds of moments that you live for in this medium.

Black Flies in Florida

We went to an actual street near Tampa, Florida, and had to paint fifty to seventy houses. Location managers should go into politics because, boy, to get fifty to seventy people to agree to let you paint their houses different colors and accept it isn't easy.

The weather made it quite difficult to shoot there, actually. There were often times when we had to stop shooting because those black flies were just covering everything. I think Johnny had it the worst, because he was covered from head to toe in leather and makeup and didn't have any hands. It's hot

and humid in Florida. I think Johnny had the most trouble, and that's where you earn your money acting, you know what I mean?

I remember one evening where Johnny was being chased. He had to run all the way down the block, you know. On the third take, Johnny runs down to the end of the street, and all of a sudden it's like, where is he, where did he go? Well, he had almost passed out, and he was throwing up in the bushes because he got so hot. When you don't have any part of your body that's able to breathe, because of the leather wardrobe, it's quite intense. I always admire people like that who don't show you the pain and torture of what they're going through to get the job done. It's something the audience never sees and probably doesn't care about.

> *The generosity of spirit that comes from him and his openness to collaborate with actors is like him being a father figure to his crew and his cast, because he is always there for them.*
>
> *Lisa Marie—Actress*

Ed Wood (1994)

Johnny Depp; Martin Landau; Sarah Jessica Parker; Patricia Arquette; Jeffrey Jones; G. D. Spradlin; Vincent D'Onofrio; Bill Murray; Mike Starr; Lisa Marie.

Rudolph Grey wrote this book on Ed Wood, titled *Nightmare of Ecstasy.* Some writers had written a script, and I was interested in maybe producing it. But I started to get into it, and I started to feel very much in sync, frighteningly enough, with the material. I had seen Ed Wood's films and was amazed at what he was doing. I've always been fascinated by perception, and that fine line of "What is talent, and what is not talent?" In reading both the book and the script I was very much fascinated by his sense of denial and his sense of enthusiasm.

What happens when you make a film is that you get very enthusiastic and it's like okay, let's make a movie, you know? You get caught up in the sets, actors, costumes, lights, all of that. The fact is there's a huge gap sometimes between what you think and what everybody else thinks. In the case of *Ed Wood,* I liked the sense of weird family it had about it. I particularly liked the relationship between Ed and Bela Lugosi. There were a lot of things that I

could relate to. Ed felt about Bela very much how I felt about Vincent Price, in certain ways. There were a lot of similarities. Not directly, but there were a lot of thematic and emotional things to me that were very strong. So, I just felt like I wanted to do it.

I tried to make this as low-budget as we could—for scale, you know. I enjoyed that, especially after working with big effects so much. It was a nice way to just work with actors. We had some known actors and some people who hadn't acted, like professional wrestlers. I liked the mix of people in that film. That was quite a good energy for me.

I love Martin Landau. Here's a guy who has experienced it all. I mean, he's worked with people like Hitchcock, and he's done these great movies. And I remember when he guest-starred on *Gilligan's Island* with the Harlem Globetrotters. He's experienced the ups and the downs and felt like he really got the Bela character. In his soul, in his heart, he knew who Bela was. He just lived it. I just felt that he would get it and he would nail it.

I actually couldn't look at Martin after a while. I had to see him as Bela all the time, because I was relating to him that way. I remember he came in one day and I said, "Martin, I can't look at you. Don't come near me." Seeing him as Bela became the thing that I was relating to. He was just so good at it. It's such a pleasure to just see great actors at work. I'm just there by the camera, going "Wow," because he's so great.

You know, right at the time when I was considering this project, I was about twenty minutes out of Poughkeepsie, where Ed Wood was from. I'm thinking, Wow, this is weird. I'm in the actual environment that he lived in, you know. This must mean some kind of fate, you know. Here I am in that world, in that environment. I just sort of sometimes look at those things as sort of karmic fate—like things that help you decide on your projects.

Once again, it's that whole issue of perception. We look at Ed's films, and some people laugh and wonder what the heck he was doing. But there is a vision there. It's a weird one, but it's a vision. In this never-ending corporate culture that the world seems to be moving in, I always gravitate towards individuals, and I just found Ed to be an individual. There's a reason why people respond to his films. It's not just because they're bad. There are many bad films. It's just that he did have a unique voice, and that does come through in his films. People laugh about it, but they still respond to that. I find that quite interesting.

When people ask me, and they often do ask me about what it's like to work for Tim Burton, I tell them that I would do anything for him. If Tim asked me to stand on my head and shoot flames out of my ass, that's what I would do.

Sarah Jessica Parker—Actress

Mars Attacks! (1996)

Jack Nicholson; Glenn Close; Annette Bening; Pierce Brosnan; Danny DeVito; Martin Short; Sarah Jessica Parker; Michael J. Fox; Tom Jones; Lukas Haas; Natalie Portman; Jim Brown; Lisa Marie; Sylvia Sidney; Paul Winfield; Pam Grier.

After working on comic-book material, I thought, What's next? Maybe I'll do a film based on the writings on the back of the cereal box or something. I just didn't know. I saw these cards called "Dinosaur Attacks," and I liked the visuals. As a kid, I had seen *Mars Attacks!*, and I was at a period in my life where I felt very much an outsider, and I'm not quite sure why. I go through waves of that. I felt like I didn't understand the world very well. Things were being presented, like politics, and I was getting the opposite meaning out of what was being said. I just felt very much like things were exactly the opposite of how they were being presented.

I think that's what I responded to in the Martians and the project in general. There was this dynamic in there that things aren't what they seem, and it's the opposite of what things really are. And so, there was that dynamic.

I originally wanted to do it in stop-motion animation because I had worked with that before. But that didn't work out as a technique. We worked with computer, which was interesting for me, and it was great because I got to meet and work with a lot of great people. Here you are, making this movie, which is basically a low-grade sci-fi, and you got all these great people. I love watching people, like great actors taking their material and just being in it, you know. That was a lot of fun and I liked the mix of people. I loved meeting and working with Pierce Brosnan and Jack Nicholson, and I got to meet Jim Brown. It's such a weird mix of people and it was a fun film to make.

I thought Jack was very appropriate to play the president. I would vote for

him. When we had to bring him on the set, we had to play "Hail to the Chief." He'd come out of his trailer, we'd play it over the loudspeaker, and he'd march around and sort of wave to everyone. Sometimes he got so into it we'd have to play it again. He'd just walk around the set again and wave.

I think most people thought I'd actually become Ed Wood after that one. It wasn't really received very well here at all. It was received well in Europe, though. If I ever have trouble in this country, I'll maybe just move to France.

Sleepy Hollow (1999)

Johnny Depp; Christina Ricci; Michael Gambon; Casper Van Dien; Jeffrey Jones; Christopher Lee; Richard Griffiths; Ian McDiarmid; Michael Gough; Christopher Walken; Miranda Richardson.

Sleepy Hollow came along at a time when I had actually been working on another project for like a year, but that never happened, and that's the first time that ever happened to me. I was a bit devastated, and was kind of reeling from that. The producers of *Sleepy Hollow* sent me the script, and you know, I was immediately taken by it because it reminded me of the type of movie that I grew up with. I loved horror films and I loved the Hammer Studios horror films, and it kind of reminded me of that a little bit. I remembered the story from the Disney cartoon, basically. That cartoon was very instrumental in my liking animation. I remember it as being a good mixture of humor, a spooky atmosphere, design, and movement—a good combination of all those things.

I liked the idea of maybe spending time in upstate New York where I wanted to make the film. It's got a beautifully haunted feeling up there. But, of course, we ended up going to England to create upstate New York. But it made sense to shoot it there. I hadn't worked in England since *Batman* and it was almost ten years to the day. I worked with some of the same people that I hadn't seen for ten years, and that was a pleasure, too, because there are great artists there.

After working with Johnny Depp a few times, he's just somebody I automatically think of for things, because I know he's able to tread that fine line between humor and believability. We weren't trying to make it like a joke. We were still trying to give it a thrust, but there was humor in it, and he's very

good at that. And he's an actor who doesn't care how he looks, so you can drag him through the mud and squirt blood on his face and do all this stuff and he still acts through it, you know. It doesn't bother him. I find there's a positive energy of freedom when you're working with an actor like that.

Sleepy Hollow was a complex shoot in the sense that we did a lot of it on stage and we built a lot of sets. We didn't have a lot of space, so a lot of the sets were forced perspective. We had to pretty much reconfigure every shot. When you have a forced perspective of haystacks or forced perspective of people, you pretty much got one angle. You have to reconfigure for the next angle. We used a lot of smoke and fog, which I don't like. It made things atmospherically unpleasant.

I always like to think of a film in terms of the color as being part of the character. I never think of it as doing the film in black or white or limited color. Each time out with each project I think of color as part of the support system and part of the character of the piece. When the director of photography and I were first discussing it, we asked ourselves if we would shoot this in black-and-white if we could, or would we shoot it in color? It was a film that I wanted in color but I also wanted it to have a feeling of those Hammer films that I loved so much. I wanted it in color, but with a sense of black. And so, we did that process where we bleached the film to be able to saturate it to a degree. We tried to find the right level so that we'd have good, solid blacks and the shadows but still be in color. When designing the sets, you have to do the same thing. We did a lot of test-painting the sets to match the concept that we were trying to do photographically. So, I always treat the color scheme as part of the character.

A Little of This and a Little of That

I'm not quite sure what Gothic means, really. In *Webster's* dictionary, I think it has a different meaning than the way other people perceive it, you know. I'm actually quite a light person, and I actually don't like horrible things. I don't like blood, and I'm not a dark person and, believe it or not, I actually don't consider my work dark.

I love how excited people get about award shows. I mean, it's like you just want to say, please calm down. Don't base your worth on this award. You know you get a sense that some people are really basing everything on this.

Picking a project is interesting because, like I said, I wouldn't know a good script if it bit me in the face, you know. People tell me that a certain script is

good, but I'm here to tell you I wouldn't know one way or another. I've always found that it's really based on how I feel and my own personal take on something. I find that my mind can talk myself in or out of things. If I respond to things on an emotional level, it pretty much stays there.

I think the industry has moved much more into the corporate area. When I began working at Warner Bros., you'd go talk to Terry Semel and Bob Daley, who were running things back then. Now, it's like the *Wizard of Oz*. It's like, pay no attention to that man behind the curtain. You just don't know whom to talk to anymore. The movie business was founded on individuals taking a risk. The movie business is a risky business. I'm always amazed at how these new people don't have the same passion for making films as the people who founded the industry. As recently as a few years ago you could still find small pockets of people who were in charge and that you could talk to. But now it's harder.

People often ask me, like how do you get into this business? I feel like such a jerk when I talk to them, because I don't know. I truly feel like I lucked into it. So, all I can say is just try to do it, you know, no matter what form it is. If you have an idea or a creative impulse, that's the key thing. I was lucky enough to be able to get those first little things done, which then allowed me to do other things. Listen, I'm the worst person to ask that, because I really don't know the answer.

The interesting thing is that I find whether you're doing a big-budget film, or a small-budget film, it seems like you never have enough money. On a big-studio movie you're paying rent to shoot at the studio. It's their studio, but you still have to pay them this exorbitant amount of money to be there. What's the reality of what money really is in these situations? I think if the studios did not play so much with funny money it might bring the budgets down and also make it less abstract and, therefore, you could feel slightly more responsible as to what you're dealing with. If you're on your own doing an independent film and you've got a million-dollar budget, you know what you've got; you know how to spend it. The more a movie costs, the more pressure there is. It's a simple fact. That's obvious. But in reality, you never feel like you have enough. Big-budget movie, low-budget movie, it's all the same. There are problems no matter how much money you have.

Note: After this interview was completed, Burton directed *Planet of the Apes,* which was released in 2001.

Tim Burton Filmography

The Island of Doctor Agor (1971)
Stalk of the Celery (1979)
Vincent (1982)
Hansel and Gretel (TV, 1982)
Frankenweenie (1984)
Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp (TV, 1984)
Pee-wee's Big Adventure (1985)
Amazing Stories (TV series, episode "Family Dog,"1985)
Alfred Hitchcock Presents (TV series, episode "The Jar," 1985)
Beetlejuice (1988)
Batman (1989)
Edward Scissorhands (1990)
Batman Returns (1992)
Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas
Ed Wood (1994)
Mars Attacks! (1994)
Sleepy Hollow (1999)
Planet of the Apes (2001)
Big Fish (2003)

Awards and Nominations

Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Films
Sleepy Hollow, Best Director (nominated), Saturn Award, 2000

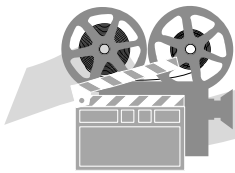
Argentinean Film Critics Association Awards
Ed Wood, Best Foreign Film, Silver Condor (nominated), 1996

Cannes Film Festival
Ed Wood, Golden Palm (nominated), 1995

Golden Satellite Awards
Mars Attacks!, Best Motion Picture—Animated or Mixed Media Entertainment (nominated), 1997

Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists
Sleepy Hollow, Best Director—Foreign Film (nominated), 2000

ShoWest Convention Awards
Director of the Year, 1990



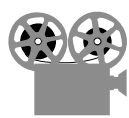
10

The Films of Barry Levinson

Academy Award–winning director-screenwriter Barry Levinson has crafted an enviable reputation in the film industry as a director who has blended literate and intelligent visions into such films as *Diner; Good Morning, Vietnam; Rain Man; Avalon; Disclosure; Wag the Dog;* and *Sphere*.

Born and raised in Baltimore, Maryland, Levinson would eventually attend American University in Washington, D.C., before heading West to begin his career as a writer. Upon his arrival in Los Angeles, he worked for the Oxford Company. He studied acting, improvisation, and production and worked comedy clubs before landing a job as a writer-performer on the *Loman and Barkley Show,* a weekly ninety-minute local program. After working on the *Marty Feldman Show* in England, he returned to Los Angeles to work on the *Carol Burnett Show* and the *Tim Conway Show,* which eventually brought him in contact with actor-writer-director-producer Mel Brooks.

Levinson's first feature film was the 1982 *Diner*, which he both wrote and directed and which he shot in his hometown of Baltimore. His career has been on the fast track ever since.



The Conversation

It's hard to explain growing up in Baltimore because there are so many unimportant, nonsensical, irrelevant things that have happened in your life that you somehow remember more than some supposed larger things, you know.

Baltimore was a short period of time in my life, but it's certainly the most influential period of my life.

I lived a block away from my cousin Eddie. We were six weeks apart in age. We went through school together. Those years of running through the backyards and jumping over the hedge to go to one another's house and just hanging around doing almost nothing is always a thing that I remember and I always questioned, Why does it stand out so much? You know, little moments of time. The Baltimore films that I have done—*Diner*, *Tin Men*, *Avalon,* and *Liberty Heights*—they go back to that period of time. I sort of reexamine my life and the events that were occurring around it and try to make sense out of those years—not as a piece of nostalgia but how it ultimately relates today and where it can be relevant to today.

My biggest ambition in life was not to work in my father's appliance store. That is the thing that stands out the most, rather than what I really wanted to *do*. When I was attending American University, I took some courses in broadcast journalism and I was working at Channel 9 TV. I was running back and forth between taking classes and doing the morning news or working hand puppets on the kid show *The Ranger Howl*. I was also working for CBS Sports while I was still in school, so I began to get interested in television. I worked in Washington, D.C., for four years and attended classes and got a chance to direct some news programs, et cetera. That was like the beginning of something that I had a passion about.

The first real break as a writer was when I came out to Los Angeles and there was a local show called *Loman and Barkley*. It was a ninety-minute weekend show. There were only four of us, and we became writers and performers on the show. That was an incredible period of time, because we come in on Monday morning and we had to decide what we were going do. We had to come up with ninety minutes by Friday. So, we kind of scrambled, and you played off the top of your head. We went with what we thought might be funny. That became highly influential, because we tried things that worked and we tried things that were complete disasters. I mean, complete, absolute disasters. But it had such energy. You learn to work on your feet. For one whole year we did that show on a weekly basis, and it was extremely influential and was really the first step in writing.

After doing that, I got a chance to work with Tim Conway, who had a variety show on CBS. It was for thirteen episodes, and it was ultimately canceled. From there, I went to work in England for comedian Marty Feldman, who was actually a comedy writer who had turned into a performer. I was

fairly young, and that was great because it opened a door. The interesting thing is that when I did Tim Conway's show, one of the producers was Ron Clark. He took a liking to me and Rudy DeLuca, who was my writing partner at that time. We had kept in touch over those few years, and while I was writing for the *Carol Burnett Show,* he called me to let me know he had a great film idea for Mel Brooks. He said that if Mel liked the idea, he thought it would be perfect for Rudy and me to work on. Well, Mel did like the idea and wanted to meet us. We met him the next day for lunch and suddenly we were about to write our first movie called *Silent Movie*. It was fascinating the way that all happened. It truly was a silent movie, except for the one line that Marcel Marceau said in the film. I really considered it an apprenticeship, because for three years we rode along with Mel. When he was shooting it, we were there, during the editing process, during the scoring process. During all those stages we had an opportunity to see how films are made from beginning to end. We did that on the *Silent Movie,* and we did that on *High Anxiety*. Although I never really thought about being a director, watching that stuff on a daily basis caused me to begin to think what would happen if I did that. And so, all of a sudden, the mind starts to put some things in place. That was really the beginning of my thinking about directing.

> *He has such a funny and quirky way of looking and finding those rhythms, and that's why some day, I think this guy will be very successful.*
>
> *Paul Reiser—Actor-Comedian*

Diner (1982)

Steve Guttenberg; Daniel Stern; Mickey Rourke; Kevin Bacon; Timothy Daly; Ellen Barkin; Paul Reiser.

For a long time I had the idea for the movie in my head, and Mel Brooks used to tell me to go ahead and write about it. He used to tell me to write about what I knew well. But I never could make sense out of it, until one day, I thought of it in terms of the guys who hung out with one another, and their real lack of understanding of females. I began to think of it in terms of how men and women don't quite connect. When that finally began to make sense, then I could sit down and write. I normally write rather quickly, because I build up this adrenaline. All of a sudden, all of these ideas are now coming

fast, and I began to write and to keep up with all these characters that began to talk to one another in my head.

Casting is always an interesting process, because you need a certain kind of blend of characters, or actors who have different kinds of rhythms and define things in a certain kind of way. Especially with an ensemble cast, you really have to put together a little music group, in a way. It's funny how casting comes about. I saw about six hundred guys for our main group. I saw one woman for the role of Beth, and that was Ellen Barkin. As soon as she came in and started to go through the piece, I thought that she would be perfect. She's got a real interesting quality about her that I hadn't seen before, and I'm not even sure I can really define, but it just seemed correct.

On the other side you can take someone like Paul Reiser, who wasn't even there for an audition. He was with a friend who had come for an audition, and they were supposed to go somewhere else together later. Our casting director Ellen Chenoweth spotted him and thought he was kind of interesting and suggested I see him. I ended up casting him in the movie. We really kind of invented his part as we went along, because I thought he could be effective in the film—and he was.

Needless to say, casting is extremely important, because if you cast incorrectly, all you end up trying to do is cover a mistake. It doesn't mean the actor is bad, but their quality isn't quite working for you, and you end up spending time trying to fix it. If you cast right, it's a dynamic that really impacts the film.

My first day directing *Diner* was a disaster. We had a girl riding along on a horse. The camera was supposed to pull back from her and show the guys in the car looking at her. I asked my assistant director if she could really ride a horse, and he said she'd be fine. So, we get ready to shoot, and all of a sudden, I see the horse and the actress just going off into the horizon, just vanishing. It took forty-five minutes to get her and the runaway horse even close to the set again. It turned out she really couldn't ride that well, and the horse was nervous, and it was cold. We lost, like, a half a day the very first day that I was shooting. So, obviously the people at MGM were panicked that I didn't know what I was doing. It made for a very nervous first day—and a few days after that.

Sometimes through accidents in filmmaking, you really discover certain things that can be extremely influential. I thought it best to do all the actual diner scenes at the end of the film, because the guys would have had a chance to be more comfortable with one another when we got to those scenes. They needed to be comfortable enough to finish one another's sentences, because they were supposed to know one another so well. So we go to shoot in the

diner, and there was an electrical fire. We basically lost the entire night that we were shooting. We notified MGM and asked for an extra day and they said no, you can't have it, because by this time, they were less enthusiastic about the movie. I explained to them that the diner stuff was really important, but they still said no. I went to my cinematographer and asked him how we were going to make up the lost time. He suggested we shoot with two cameras. I was afraid that the actors would overlap their lines, but he said that's the way we talk in real life. We solved the problem by putting a mike on all the actors, so even if sometimes you can't directly cut to a particular actor because the mechanics of it are wrong, at least the rhythm of it is correct. From that day on, I've always done that. So, out of that problem it became a technique that I was most comfortable with and I've used since. It's easier for the actors, and, I think, to ultimately sell the text as best as possible.

The Natural (1984)

Robert Redford; Robert Duvall; Glenn Close; Kim Basinger; Wilford Brimley; Barbara Hershey; Robert Prosky; Richard Farnsworth; Joe Don Baker; John Finnegan; Alan Fudge.

I met Robert Redford at Sundance while I was there for a seminar. He had seen *Diner* and thought it was interesting. About eight months later, I had an idea that I thought maybe he might be interested in, but as it turned out he wasn't that interested. Then we were talking about baseball, because he and I are both big baseball fans. That's when he told me he had this script called *The Natural* and suggested I read it to see what I thought. I read it, and I was fascinated by it. So, here I was, going from my little Baltimore movie to thousands of people in the stands at a baseball stadium, and all of a sudden the logistics are much larger and much more complicated. But, for whatever reason, I felt confident about that.

There's something a little dangerous, especially when you don't do a baseball movie in the conventional way. This film was much larger than life, and it was almost mythological. It has all these kind-of-elaborate displays of things that happen throughout the film, but I thought that it would be interesting to do it because we've seen baseball as a baseball game. We can watch it on television. But in many ways *The Natural* was like any great moment. It always gets to be larger than life. In some ways, there is a mythology to baseball. Certain things happen, and no one knows whether they are true or not, and it

adds to the myth, to the legend of it all. *The Natural* was very much that. It was interesting to experiment with those ideas and those techniques.

It wasn't a great experience making the movie, because it was so difficult and so time-consuming just to do simple little things—like when you have a stadium that's supposed to be sold out for the big game, and everyone is in costume. We had to find ways to do it, because we didn't have a gigantic budget, you know. I think the budget was somewhere around $23 million. But it was challenging, and I wanted to see if we could capture that kind of mythology.

I think *The Natural* is, in fact, a fairy tale. It is all of the great sports stories and legends rolled into one. The irony is that it actually does happen, and that's what's so odd about it. These improbable moments do happen all the time. Kirk Gibson, who played for the Dodgers and who could hardly walk, came up as a pinch-hitter and hit the home run that won that game, and he was limping around the field. So, the impossible and the improbable do happen.

I think *The Natural* was a good learning experience, in that I worked with established actors like Redford, Glenn Close, Robert Duvall, Wilford Brimley, and the others. They're all so different, and you have to find a way to communicate with actors with different styles of working, different ways of preparation. You know they've been around, and you know they know their craft. You do have to find a way to communicate with them, because they all bring different things to the set. You learn from different actors and the way they present themselves. You want to take the best of what they can do, and maybe you'll find something that none of you expected. Getting a moment that looks like a moment that you know about—that's one thing. But to get beyond it, get beyond just a credible moment to something that turns out to be at times amazing.

Redford took a huge chance on the guy who made this little movie. I mean, here's a guy who's already been a terrific actor for a number of years and won an Academy Award as a director. So, for him as a major movie star to take that gamble with me, well I can only thank him many times over.

Young Sherlock Holmes (1985)

Nicholas Rowe; Alan Cox; Sophie Ward; Anthony Higgins; Susan Fleetwood; Freddie Jones; Nigel Stock; Roger Ashton-Griffiths; Earl Rhodes.

I was attracted to *Young Sherlock,* because I love the Victorian period, and I thought I'd love to play there and create that kind of world. I also wanted to

learn about special effects. You have to understand all the new tools that keep coming to filmmaking. So, I thought that would be an interesting learning experience, in an area that I've been fascinated by.

We had this scene in a church, where the image of the man in the stained glass jumps out and becomes a real person. The church vicar begins backing away, believing he's having hallucinations. I had asked the people at Industrial Light and Magic if, when we see the image coming toward us, the camera could keep moving until we're over his shoulder, looking back at the vicar. We shot the scene, and they actually were able to do that later. That was the beginning of being able to make these kinds of moves that we now see all the time. It's a terrific shot, but it was the first time something like this was done.

Writing versus Directing

I'm not sure if I really think of myself as a writer or a director first. I've never tried to put myself in categories or think of myself any one way. Maybe that's why the movies I've done have been all over the place. My interests are varied. I'm not that concerned with any specific kind of image or a certain type of a film. I never even think of myself as a writer. I always feel that when I'm writing, the characters are actually talking in my head, and I'm just trying to keep up with what they have to say. It's as if it's not coming from me but from all these voices I hear and I'm just trying to keep up with it. And then, somewhere around 5:00 in the evening, everybody's finished talking, and I'll start again the next day. So, I've never thought of myself as a writer as I've seen them portrayed in movies, where they're kind of pensive and walking on the beach and thinking and doing all that stuff. I don't work that way.

I've never even thought of myself as a director, much less a writer-director. In the end, what it comes down to is that you're fascinated by it and you're dying to make it and you have the passion to see it on the screen. It's when I read something or write something and I really love it, I just want to do it—period.

> *I first met Barry Levinson at an open dance call. I had to sing "Oklahoma" in Thai and Vietnamese before he would give me the part.*
>
> *Robin Williams—Actor-Comedian*

Good Morning, Vietnam (1987)

Robin Williams; Forest Whitaker; Tung Thanh Tran; Christara Sukapatane; Bruno Kirby; Robert Wuhl; J. T. Walsh; Noble Willingham.

I loved the idea of a guy in Vietnam who was a radio announcer. Someone whose whole conflict shifts and all of a sudden it's about to explode. His awareness of the world that he's in becomes more frightening on some level.

Let me back up again, because I should probably say the first thing about *Good Morning, Vietnam* came to me when I read a few Vietnamese movies that had been made. The ones that had been made previously were always about the fighting in the jungle, and they are the enemy, or we are the enemy. It is the war zone. But when I read the script, I thought this one would be interesting. I could show the Vietnamese as people in a place, in a town, living their lives and going to movies, shopping—what they normally do in their lives as people. Then this character, played by Robin Williams, comes in contact with them, and we could see things with a sense of humor. I had not seen the Vietnamese portrayed as just people. And then the idea that it could have humor—not the slapstick kind of service-comedy type of thing. We had not seen that before in a movie. Those elements excited me, and I was interested in exploring where that could go.

There were things written for the Vietnamese to say, but they couldn't say the lines the way they were. So a lot of the times we would slate the scene. We would just turn the cameras on and they would start talking. Or Robin would talk to them, or I might say something off-camera and just kind of get it going. In that way, you would really capture their true personalities.

One example is that they didn't really know how to play softball. We had guys playing MPs in the scene, so I told them that if the Vietnamese do something wrong, go over and correct them like you're trying to help out. I mean, in that game, they didn't know what to do. We shot it almost like we were doing a documentary, because they were laughing and carrying on in a very genuine way.

There's an interesting moment when one of the characters is supposed to be pitching the melon they're using for a ball. The Vietnamese guy comes over to me and tells me he knows about softball and they would not be using a melon, but a real ball. I just told him that I was not in charge of equipment

and that he would have to talk with someone else. He asked me who to talk to and I suggested he talk to Robin. Then I ran over to Robin and told him what was going on and that he should talk with him. Well, I just rolled the cameras and when you see that on film, that is a real moment. There are a number of moments like that, where they're just trying to express themselves. And Robin is so good with trying to communicate with people. Robin was always trying to learn expressions so that he could talk and communicate. He finally found the way to really make them laugh.

Good Morning, Vietnam has a number of things that I'm fascinated by. I remember we were out in a village, and Robin was sitting with this family. One of the little kids was crying. What happened became the scene, because we couldn't do the scene as originally written—the Vietnamese people couldn't make it work that way. That scene is really made up by Robin, who tries to amuse the kid that's crying. That simple moment, I thought, was really kind of fascinating. This serviceman out there in the Vietnamese village with these people, and how they interact—even though they can't communicate. That moment stands out in my mind.

One of the things that I remember happened when we were in Bangkok. It's an incredibly crowded, noisy city. We had the scene where the bar gets blown up, and we were all prepared to do it. Then we run into some problems with some officials. We were waiting around all day to get the okay to go so we could blow up this set. It was like a high drama. We keep waiting all day long and never did shoot. Then we came back again because they said they had worked it out but it turns out we still didn't shoot. So, for two days we were waiting to blow up this place and we couldn't do it. What we finally decided to do was do the aftermath of it. We have all the fire and everybody running out and all of that stuff. But we never got that shot where they're walking into the bar as it's being blown up until we got back and shot it in Los Angeles.

So, Explain What You Do

I don't know how to define what I do, because I'm not sure what I do, you know what I mean? It would be great if there was this book that tells you how to talk to actors to get them to do what you want. I just don't know. You just have to be on the same wavelength at a certain period in time, so everybody seems to understand what's it about, the style that it's done in, rather than trying to explain. Sometimes there's a sentence or a line an actor doesn't understand. But at some point, everybody has to get tuned in to the piece

that you're going to make, so everybody is comfortable with it. And my feeling is, you want to create a comfort level, so that when behavior comes out in ways that you may not expect, you recognize it. So, the more comfortable that an actor can be in the environment, the more honest behavior emerges. You have to be able to do that, but I can't honestly tell you I know how I really do it.

The Climate in the Industry

I think the climate we are in today is a difficult one for filmmakers. The film that best lends itself to merchandising is the film that the studio will most embrace. You know, the film that can be explained and sold in thirty seconds is the film that the studios ultimately want to embrace the most. The films that are more complex or more personal are harder to sell, because the upside is much less. Look back at the movies of the Thirties, Forties, Fifties, and Sixties and see how they told so many different kinds of stories. In order to tell a story today, somebody with a gun has to be coming to kill somebody else, you know. That's an oversimplification. But if someone were to say today, Let's make *All About Eve*, they'd ask you, Why? The answer would be, Because it's a good story.

I think film is going in certain directions that are inevitable. That's why, in some cases, technique becomes its own form of entertainment, as opposed to, say, a John Ford film. You would see that his hand was not all over it. For my tastes, there are films being made today that oftentimes have a director's hand all over the movie. It's like they want you to see every trick, and it becomes its own form of entertainment. It's not really the story that you're involved with, it's the tricks. So, there are a lot of changes going on and it's the way life changes and things evolve.

For me personally, I have to find a way to satisfy myself. Sometimes when I go back to some of the more personal films, I dread it, in a way. I absolutely dread it, because I know that it is such a difficult task to go down that road, and that it scares me to death. The only reason I continue to do it is I can't stop myself. Sometimes those ideas just come out, and I have to write them, and I want to make them. You leave yourself so open for criticism and you know that the upside is going to be so slight. But when I go in that direction, it's the only way I can satisfy myself. Fortunately I'm fascinated by other kinds of stories, and so I can do some of those other films and actually survive. I have this kind of schizophrenic career in a way. But ultimately, it's been rather gratifying.

Tin Men (1987)

Richard Dreyfuss; Danny DeVito; Barbara Hershey; John Mahoney; Jackie Gayle; Stanley Brock; Seymour Cassel; Bruno Kirby; J. T. Walsh.

When I was doing *Diner* and they were setting background, I told the assistant director that we needed to see some old guys. He asked me why, and I told him that it was where the Tin Men would sit, the aluminum-siding salesmen that used to hang out there. We used to hear their stories—they were like the Damon Runyon characters, you know. Then one day, it occurred to me that it would be interesting to do a piece that was about life in the Sixties and the rise of feminism. So, I sat down and wrote *Tin Men*. My father had been involved in aluminum siding for a short period of time and I knew a lot about them. There are so many kinds of stories about all the scams that they did and all of the con jobs that they pulled off. So, I thought that would be kind of interesting to examine.

Tin Men, to me, is like this death of a rat pack, you know. You know, the guys and the bravado and all that kind of stuff. And the rise of Barbara Hershey's character, even though she can't articulate it, because it's too early. And it's about rise of the feminist movement. She begins to take control of her own destiny in many ways and not just be the little woman. That's what kind of got into my head when I wanted to do it. It's also the changing of the Sixties, and certain events are about to totally change the world. So, that's what was in my head, but I always hate to talk about what the message is in my movies.

> *I was in the car with Tom Cruise, and I said, "Yeah, yeah." Barry told me to use that when I needed to. It was brilliant direction . . . and as good a gift as I have ever gotten from a director.*
>
> *Dustin Hoffman—Actor*

Rain Man (1988)

Dustin Hoffman; Tom Cruise; Valeria Golino; Gerald R. Molen; Jack Murdock; Michael D. Roberts; Ralph Seymour; Bonnie Hunt.

I was sort of interested in the idea that we would have someone who is autistic riding around in a car with a guy who's a salesman and a con artist and a

manipulator and a wheeler-dealer, and he can't do any of those things to the person sitting next to him. He can't con; he can't use any of those things that he knows how to do. There's a moment where he's going to have to deal with himself and who he really was. A reevaluation is going to take place, because there is no interaction that's taking place there with the guy sitting next to him. You know, Raymond can't be changed, and he doesn't pay attention to most things. There's no real conversation going on, and Tom Cruise's character has to deal with that, and himself, for the very first time during this three-day journey across country.

I felt that was an interesting thing to explore as well as autism, which no one had really seen in any depth before. Tom Cruise's character, Charlie, will change, but Raymond, played by Dustin Hoffman, won't change and won't get better. We needed to really strip away all of the other storytelling devices and adventures that may happen and just put two people into a car and let the movie really rest on their shoulders as we make this journey. Tom and Dustin had been always interested in doing the movie. It had gone through various drafts, and different directors had been involved along the way, and I came into it very late in the game.

What was interesting was we shot the film in continuity. In many ways, it probably was an incredible, freeing experience, because we were able to do and find things along the road. So, things happened and it evolved. It was a very loose type of filmmaking, as we traveled from Cincinnati to Los Angeles.

Dustin is terrific in that he researches it and he has wonderful ideas. Then he has this moment where he feels he can't do it. He's not sure what to do. And sometimes a director can't help above and beyond a given moment. We were doing something one day, and I told him that the character looked too depressing. I told him that when we see autistic people, they seem so involved, whether it's being inquisitive or whatever, they're fascinated by whatever they get hung up on. That's not depressing, that's being involved. He said that was a good note and then proceeded to do that.

Now we're doing the scene and it doesn't seem to be going anywhere. I told Dustin that he was going to have to respond, but he got so involved that he didn't know how to respond. But out of that came the "yeah" that Dustin began to do when Tom spoke to him. So, when you see the movie, it's what keeps him in the scene and allows him to be interested in something else. It's like he hears something, but he doesn't pay attention to it. So, if he's doing like that, and Charlie says, "Raymond, you want to get something to eat?"

Raymond says, "Yeah." And then when he finally sees whatever it may be, then he might not want to do it. The "yeah" is only like he's not paying attention, but it keeps him in there.

In the film, there's a moment in the hotel where Tom Cruise is talking to his girlfriend. She gets mad and she jumps out of the tub and she goes into the bedroom. The camera goes with her and she starts to get some clothes and the argument continues. Then they go back into the bathroom. In order to do that shot, we were pulling the walls out and moving furniture during the take. If you watch it carefully, it would have been impossible for the camera to get where it was unless somehow the camera made the move. The walls were being slid in and out in order to pull it off, but you're not aware of it because you're involved in what's taking place. In a million years, you'll never figure out what was really taking place behind the scenes, you know. It was a way to hide it, rather than to celebrate it—that's really the trick. Now everyone will want to go back and watch that scene again.

Rain Man only did $6 million on its opening weekend and eventually did $175 million. That was still at a time when word of mouth used to really spread, the way movies used to be released. The first weekend, it wasn't really sold out. Then it kind of clicked in, you know, the second, third, and fourth week, and it suddenly started going up and up. That was exciting. But you know, you never know about movies. I mean that's one of the great things about it. Someone out there suddenly takes to your movie in such a way that excites them, and they tell people, and other people want to come.

Avalon (1990)

Leo Fuchs; Eve Gordon; Lou Jacobi; Armin Mueller-Stahl; Elizabeth Perkins; Joan Plowright; Kevin Pollack; Aidan Quinn; Israel Rubinek; Elijah Wood.

Avalon is made up of a lot of stories from my family and is fairly accurate in a number of ways. My father did get involved in selling television sets early on. Then his store got larger and they started the idea of discounts. He ended up with what would be considered today a discount department store. Television was extremely influential to the growth of his business. Man, any of the other things in terms of the family—how they argue, the breakup of the family—all that is based on my experiences, and a lot of those things did take place.

In my mind, it had almost nothing to do with the immigrant experience,

because the story really begins in 1948. It's really about the death of the storyteller, the head of the family. The one who tells you all the stories about who did what and where they came from and all of that. Then the other storyteller that came into the house, the TV, was wrapped up in a nice box with a ribbon on the top, and that one took control. The television now became the storyteller. That's what I was interested in, exploring the dynamics of television in the 1950s and the move to suburbia and the changing of the economics and the impact on an extended family. The grandfather talks about when he came to America and about the fireworks, et cetera, and it's all very grand, and it's pure storytelling.

Then comes the end of the movie, and his grandson and his great-grandson are in an old-age home visiting him. The little kid is looking at the television because there's a Thanksgiving Day parade going on. Then the grandfather starts to say, "At the very beginning, when I came to America . . ." The young boy looks to the great-grandfather, looks to the television, looks back at the grandfather, and ultimately settles on the television. That's what he's interested in, much more so than what this old man has to say. That's what I really thought the movie was about, and that's what really prompted me to write it.

With *Avalon* I couldn't figure out how to do a movie with such a large cast and have stars in it. It kind of knocks it out of balance. The way we did it was the only way to do it, because if you put a big movie star in, who is that going to be? It would have been hard to pull off, because those scenes seem to be more suited to just a good ensemble cast, which is what I had.

> *What's so interesting about him is that there's a lot going on in there, in terms of his imagination of how he sees the picture, that you can't just get from reading the script.*
>
> *Joe Mantegna—Actor*

Bugsy (1991)

Warren Beatty; Annette Bening; Harvey Keitel; Ben Kingsley; Elliott Gould; Joe Mantegna; Richard C. Sarafian; Bebe Neuwirth.

Warren Beatty called and said he had this script about Bugsy Siegel that he wanted to do. I think at that time it was like 250 pages when I first read it,

but I was fascinated by it. We got the script down to a manageable size and we went off and did it. A lot of what is in the movie is true. It's condensed, but a lot of the things that writer Jimmy Toback knew about Bugsy are in the movie. For instance, he did want to go to Italy and kill Mussolini. Obviously, we had to take liberties. But I would say, overall, it had the real sense of what Bugsy Siegel was about.

I was fascinated by how frightening that character could be, because he didn't talk like a thug. He was an attractive man—charming as can be. He was out in Los Angeles and found himself around a lot of Hollywood types, and he would hang out with them. He went to their parties, and in reality, this guy was a killer, a psychopath. Because he was so charming, no one could quite believe that this guy could be that much of a madman. He was flamboyant and seductive. That to me is what made *Bugsy* so frightening, because, you know, a gangster is a gangster. But for him to be that charming, that was an interesting character to explore.

The most difficult part of shooting *Bugsy* probably was the fact that we had to re-create a casino. We had to re-create that casino in a place that is so radically different today. We had to just find a desert and put our hotel out there and let it be the beginning of Las Vegas. We rebuilt the Flamingo out there in the middle of nowhere, with the original signage and all of that stuff. On what is supposed to be Christmas Eve, it has Jimmy Durante's name and whatever else it was on the billboard. There was an elderly couple driving along in their car. As it turns out, they had gotten married in Las Vegas and had gone to the real Flamingo on opening night. Anyway, they're driving along and suddenly there is the Flamingo as it was. They thought they were in the Twilight Zone. Since we had not begun shooting, there were no cameras or anything like that around, so they pulled up and they got out and they like walked in. It looked exactly like the Flamingo looked, you know. They were completely confused by what was going on. Then they ran into some of our people who told them it was a movie set. But for a minute they thought they had walked back in time.

I love you, Barry. I've tried to say nice things about you in this interview. Now, send a check!

Robin Williams—Actor-Comedian

Toys (1992)

Robin Williams; Michael Gambon; Joan Cusack; Robin Wright; LL Cool J; Donald O'Connor; Arthur Malet; Jack Warden; Debi Mazar.

Toys was almost like a surrealistic piece of work. I don't know if there's actually been any other American surrealistic comedy. *Toys* intrigued me, because so much of it is actually about ideas of war and video games. How you can train children, because they have such spectacular hand-eye coordination. How quickly they can actually learn to shoot and the dangers of all of that. They could be playing a game, but they could actually be learning to fly missiles and whatever by remote control, and they wouldn't even know. To them, it would be just playing a game. But the reality is it can become something else. So, it was this kind of odd movie that would mix in the military establishment and the toy industry and how one begins to influence the other and the dangers of that presented in some cockeyed, surrealistic, absurd comedy.

Whenever we screened the movie, it received a really terrific response. But it had more critical attacks than probably anything I had ever worked on. It was viciously attacked by the critics as being a violent movie, when in reality no one gets killed in the film. There are just toys shooting at toys. We created this overly sweet, cockeyed family, then put it against this other element, which is kind of darker and more sinister and absurd. Completely insane things are going on in this film. But when we showed it to an audience, they would applaud during the film.

But ultimately it was buried. But it's not really for me to judge or make judgments. You do the work and you put it out there. Sometimes you're embraced and sometimes you're attacked. Maybe we should have said in the beginning of the film that it was a fable. But it becomes pointless to look back to see how you might have done the movie differently. And you can't second-guess the one you're going to do because you haven't done it yet. I think the second a filmmaker becomes afraid to do something, then he or she becomes inhibited. And if you're inhibited, then you can never express yourself and have that freedom to gamble, to experiment, to take the chances and to go where your mind and your passion leads you. All I can rely on is my own instincts of what I feel and what I need to do.

Jimmy Hollywood (1994)

Joe Pesci; Christian Slater; Victoria Abril; Jason Beghe; John Cothran Jr.; Hal Fishman; Jerry Dunphy; Andrea Kutyas.

Jimmy Hollywood was fascinating to me, because for one, you actually see these people in Hollywood, these dreamers that are never going to make it. They are and always will be on the outskirts of it. It's not the Hollywood you saw in those movies of the 1930s and the 1940s. It's not a nice, little, charming town. The Hollywood of today is a tough place.

What I was interested in is that one event that takes place and the character sees himself on TV and then begins to say, "Oh, well, that's my role." I had read one time that the movie was about an actor and then it was about a vigilante. And you say, no, no, no! It's about an actor, and then an actor who's just *playing* a vigilante. He could care less about it. He has no conviction whatsoever. He just found himself a role and because television showed it, then he thinks he needs to do something else, because he wants to get back on television. He wants to be a star.

Whether you're the star of some kind of crazy event that's taking place on the evening news, you're on the television. He's created a character. He has no politics. He has no convictions about anything. He's trying to feed the character that's on the screen. I thought that seemed to be an interesting, maybe slightly abrasive movie to make.

Disclosure (1994)

Michael Douglas; Demi Moore; Donald Sutherland; Caroline Goodall; Roma Maffia; Dylan Baker; Rosemary Forsyth; Dennis Miller; Suzie Plakson.

I thought what Crichton did was to deal with a sexual harassment issue very effectively, rather than dealing with it head-on. He turned the whole thing upside down and really saw the problems, the dangers, and I think that was interesting. It makes it more provocative, when you begin to think about the issue. Otherwise you could say sexual harassment, and some people are going to have certain opinions that are already formed and locked in place. But if you turn everything around on itself, your mind has got to start to think a little bit more.

I also was fascinated by the design possibilities with all these glass offices. On one hand, it seemed very friendly. Then, at a certain point, it becomes almost like paranoia because you can see people doing things and you don't know what they're talking about. So *Disclosure* becomes very much a case of paranoia, corporate intrigue, and manipulation. To play that out without anyone shooting anyone and yet create all that suspense was interesting to me.

What's interesting about that movie is how people react to the sex scene between Michael Douglas and Demi Moore, because there's no nudity at all. You really see nothing in that particular scene, but it seemed extremely graphic. And yet, what we do see affects us, because that is really what the film is about and how it will play out and be debated throughout the film. So it needs to be strong enough, and we interpret it in ways that may not have taken place. It was done in a way that allows the mind to work, and the mind then comes up with what you think took place in that sequence. What took place, who said what, who did what, is going to play out throughout the movie in terms of the issue of sexual harassment.

To be honest about it, at first I couldn't figure out how to shoot that sequence, because the script said it's in the office, then on the couch. I couldn't figure out how to shoot it so that it would have a roughness about it. Then it occurred to me that if she's new to the company, they're redecorating her office. Therefore, rather than being on the comfort of the couch it could actually be on a piece of scaffolding and it would make the scene rough. It would be hard and the lighting would be very erratic, which could add to the tension of the sequence. In the end, that's how we did it.

Sleepers (1996)

Kevin Bacon; Billy Crudup; Robert De Niro; Ron Eldard; Minnie Driver; Vittorio Gassman; Dustin Hoffman; Terry Kinney; Bruno Kirby; Frank Medrano; Jason Patric; Brad Pitt; Brad Renfro.

Lorenzo Carcaterra wrote the book. It was offered to me, and I was interested, and I sat down and wrote the screenplay for it. It all happened rather quickly, and before the book was ever released, we had already begun production.

Whether all that stuff happened exactly as it was in the book perplexed me, because this wasn't like some national case that made big headlines.

This is something that took place about twenty years ago. I was always fascinated as to why all of a sudden this was going be under investigation as to its authenticity. Everything that I know in talking to Lorenzo always seemed credible to me. One time, we were doing something in the courtroom, and I had a question and Lorenzo said he really wasn't sure, that he would call Michael or whatever, I forget his real name, and get an answer. Then he came back to me with some additional information for that scene as to why he did a particular thing. So I believe that what he really wrote was very much the truth. Did he take liberties with certain things that were not so important to it? I'm sure he did. But I think the hard details of the piece are accurate.

De Niro read it and was interested in the role of the priest. Brad Pitt came aboard as Michael, and I called Dustin because any time I'm making a movie, he always calls and asks what role I might have for him. In this case, I told him there was a little role that I thought he could be great in. He read it and liked it and he came in. Then we got Jason Patric and Minnie Driver and the others; all in all a great cast of actors.

One of the defining moments in the film, which I thought was extraordinary, was De Niro listening to Jason Patric's character explaining what happened at the reform school. We don't really hear what Jason Patric says—you can't quite hear it. The camera stays on De Niro as he listens. I mean the camera just sits on him for maybe twenty-five or thirty seconds. I think that shot on his face is one of the most amazing moments that I've seen in film. It's like an individual hearing something that's so devastating and he does it with such simplicity. For me it's one of the great moments in film.

Wag the Dog (1997)

Dustin Hoffman; Robert De Niro; Anne Heche; Denis Leary; Willie Nelson; Andrea Martin; Kirsten Dunst; William H. Macy; Craig T. Nelson; Woody Harrelson.

De Niro and Dustin wanted to work together. They had gotten a book and developed a script. I read the script and told them that I really didn't care for it. Dustin suggested I read the book, so I did, and I still wasn't crazy about it. Finally we all met in San Francisco, and I told them what I didn't like. During that meeting we talked about bringing David Mamet in to do a new screenplay, which he did. We went back and forth and we did little things to

it and kind of worked on it and at a certain point I thought it was good. We had a reading in Los Angeles with Bob and Dustin and bunch of other people. It seemed to work, and we began to talk about shooting the film quickly, because Bob had another film to do, and I was going to do another film with Dustin. We decided to shoot quickly—a thirty-day movie, like really down and dirty. And that was it and we went off and did the piece.

It's interesting, because we ended up getting really terrific reviews, you know. I talked to a couple of news people, who thought that this could not really happen in real life. They thought it was a fun film, but it could never happen—all these circumstances, and the fact that we featured Albania in the piece and the fact that the women in the film wore a beret, and all that. Of course, we all know what happened next in real life, don't we? But it was fun to work in a world of playing with politics, because politics are always a no-no, in a sense, because the subject never does do well at the box office.

We did the film fast and cheap and made it for $15 million, and we had a good time. We started going so fast, we actually finished a day quicker than we had on the schedule. We got out of control, we were working so quickly. But it was an interesting piece to do.

Sphere (1998)

Dustin Hoffman; Sharon Stone; Samuel L. Jackson; Peter Coyote; Liev Schreiber; Queen Latifah; Marga Gómez; Huey Lewis.

Sphere was difficult because it's this little tiny habitat two thousand feet under water. It's claustrophobic and it's small. It is frustrating because you're all squeezed in there, and it was hard to move around. So that was exhausting, in a certain way, just trying to work in such small quarters, even though at times we can move the walls. But a lot of times, as the camera was moving, you needed to have it be really the size that it was supposed to be. That was tiring. But that's part of the quality we wanted, claustrophobia about being underwater and the isolation of it all.

It wasn't an action picture. It has action in it, but it's really a psychological piece. That's always very hard to pull off, because what is real and what is imagined? What is actually going on down there? There is no monster, you know. This fear is not a monster. It doesn't come crashing in and chasing through the building. There is nothing there. It is just the fear that's in the mind that somehow this thing set off that got these people so paranoid about

things. And so, it was really a movie that was a mind game and very much a psychological piece rather than an action film.

Messages are always difficult to play with. I think what it is is how effective or how frightening can your subconscious ultimately be if it's unleashed. You're not really in control of that. How many fears do we have that affect us in ways that ultimately don't allow us to really hear or see what is really taking place? Those are the interesting aspects of what *Sphere* could be about.

On Dustin Hoffman

First of all, Dustin is a great actor. If you were ever to define what a movie star is, you wouldn't come up with Dustin Hoffman. You can't define Dustin Hoffman, because he's unique. He is one of a kind and he's not one character. There is no Dustin Hoffman. He is many, many people. Think of him as a kid in *The Graduate*, think of him in *Midnight Cowboy* or *Rain Man* or on stage in *Death of a Salesman*—you think, Holy God—he's from here to way over here. He can do comedy and he can do drama. He has an enormous range, and yet he's still Dustin somewhere in there. He's intelligent and has a great sense of how to connect with people, because he's very interesting.

On a day-to-day basis, he's like an actor who's making his first movie. He has that enthusiasm and that energy to want to make things happen and try things and experiment. That's what makes it so much fun to work with him, because he's never going to give up on it or just come out and do his thing and take a walk. He's always going to be in there trying things.

On Baltimore

It's where I grew up. There are moments and images and characters and places and people that are very, very vivid in my mind. If I find a reason to write one of what you might call the Baltimore stories, then I do it and go back, you know. I don't want to go back just for nostalgia. I did *Liberty Heights* there, which is really about race and religion and class distinction. That ultimately was enough to get me to go back and to explore a lot of those issues. So every so often, some idea comes about, and I think I can apply that to when I grew up and what I know.

Where Is This All Going?

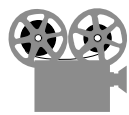
If somebody asked me where I thought my career was going, I'd have to say, I have no idea. I had no idea in the beginning where I might actually be right now. This is not something that I had wanted by design, you know. I love the

idea that someone will say they liked *Diner* but then didn't know that I did *Rain Man,* or loved *Rain Man* and didn't know that I had done *The Natural*—because they're so totally different, because in the end they're just these movies. Ultimately I have to serve the story.

How Do You Want to Be Remembered?

That's a tough question. That somehow seems egotistical in a way. How do you even know that you will be remembered, period? The fact that I like to make films with good stories, that I'm fascinated by characters and behavior and personal kinds of moments and humor and humanity—that's what ultimately excites me. If I can continue to do that and have a good time and have people be fascinated by it, that's enough for me.

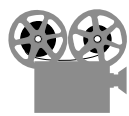
I was walking out of a hotel one time and came across this Japanese couple. They knew that I had made *Avalon*. They told me that it was just like their family. I'm thinking, *Avalon* is my family and I made it so specific to my family, yet they think it's like their family. That's exciting, and that's the joy of it all, that I made a film that many, many people can relate to.



Barry Levinson Filmography

Diner (1982)
Diner (TV, 1983)
The Natural (1984)
Young Sherlock Holmes (1985)
Good Morning, Vietnam (1987)
Tin Men (1987)
Rain Man (1988)
Avalon (1990)
Bugsy (1991)
Toys (1992)
Homicide: Life on the Street (TV series, episodes "Gone for Goode," The Gas Man," 1993)
Disclosure (1994)

Jimmy Hollywood (1994)
Sleepers (1996)
Wag the Dog (1997)
Sphere (1998)
Liberty Heights (1999)
Original Diner Guys (1999)
The 20th Century: Yesterday's Tomorrows (TV, 1999)
The Beat (TV series, 2000)
An Everlasting Piece (2000)
Bandits (2001)
The Path to War (TV, 2002)
Envy (2003)



Awards and Nominations

Academy Awards, USA

Bugsy, Best Director (nominated), 1992
Bugsy, Best Picture (nomination shared with Mark Johnson and Warren Beatty), 1992
Avalon, Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen (nominated), 1991
Rain Man, Best Director, 1989
Diner, Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen (nominated), 1983

American Comedy Awards

Creative Achievement Award, 1999

Berlin International Film Festival

Wag the Dog, Special Jury Prize, 1998
Wag the Dog, Golden Berlin Bear (nominated), 1998
Toys, Golden Berlin Bear (nominated), 1993
Bugsy, Golden Berlin Bear (nominated), 1992
Rain Man, Golden Berlin Bear, 1989
Rain Man, Reader Jury of the *Berliner Morgenpost,* 1989

Boston Society of Film Critics Awards
Diner, Best Screenplay, 1983

Cesar Awards
Rain Man, Best Foreign Film (nominated), 1990

Directors Guild of America
Rain Man, Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (shared with Gerald R. Molen, David McGiffert, Gara Giallanza, and Charylanne Martin), 1989

Golden Globe Awards
Bugsy, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1992
Avalon, Best Screenplay—Motion Picture (nominated), 1991
Rain Man, Best Director—Motion Picture (nominated), 1989

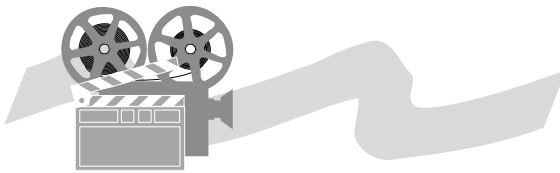
Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards
Bugsy, Best Director, 1991

Razzie Awards
Toys, Worst Director (nominated), 1993

ShoWest Convention
Director of the Year, 1998

U.S. Comedy Arts Festival
AFI Filmmaker Award, 2000

Writers Guild of America
Avalon, Best Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen, 1991
Diner, Best Comedy Written Directly for the Screen (nominated), 1983
Silent Movie, Best Comedy Written Directly for the Screen (nominated, shared with Mel Brooks, Ron Clark, and Rudy DeLuca), 1977



Index

ABC, 59–60
Abyss, The, 69
Academy Awards, USA, 22, 52, 74, 96, 152, 219
Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films, 74–75, 96, 130, 194
Affliction, 155, 167, 168, 169–170, 173
After Hours, 42, 53, 54
Age of Innocence, The, 46–47, 50, 52, 54
Alfred Hitchcock Presents, 1, 3
Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 37, 39, 50, 53
All About Eve, 206
Allen, Woody, 87, 104
Allied Artists, 117
All the Right Moves, 42
Altman, Robert, 1–25
  Aria, 23
  awards/nominations of, 22–25
  background of, 1–3
  Black and Blue, 24
  Brewster McCloud, 6–7, 12
  Buffalo Bill and the Indians, Or Sitting Bull's History Lesson, 11–12, 23
  Chicken and the Hawk, The, 5
  Cookie's Fortune, 18–19, 22, 23, 24
  Countdown, 3–4
  Delinquents, The, 1, 3
  Dr. T and the Women, 19, 25
  filmography of, 20–22
  Fool For Love, 23, 24
  Gingerbread Man, The, 16–17
  Images, 23, 25
  Jazz '34, 25
  Kansas City, 23
  *M*A*S*H*, 1, 4, 5–6, 7, 22, 23, 24
  McCabe & Mrs. Miller, 7–9, 12, 25
  Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle, 24
  Nashville, 10, 12, 22, 23, 24, 25
  photo of, x
  Player, The, 14–15, 22, 23, 24, 25
  Popeye, 12–13
  on rehearsals, 17–18
  Secret Honor, 23
  Short Cuts, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25
  television and, 1–2, 3, 4, 6, 13–14
  That Cold Day in the Park, 4–5
  Thieves Like Us, 9, 10
  3 Women, 23
  Vincent & Theo, 13–14
  Wedding, A, 23, 25
  writing of, 2
Amblin, 57
American Cinema Editors, 75, 130
American Comedy Awards, 219
American Film Institute, 44, 52, 75
American Gigolo, 159, 161
American Graffiti, 64
American International Pictures, 35, 117, 120
American Society of Cinematographers, 22, 52, 75
Amistad, 70, 76, 77, 78, 79
Angela's Ashes, 133, 149–150, 153
Angel Heart, 143–144
Argentinean Film Critics Association Awards, 195
Aria, 23
Arkoff, Sam, 120, 122
Auberjonois, Rene, 1, 8
Australian Film Institute, 52
Avalon, 197, 198, 209–210, 218, 219, 220
Avoriaz Fantastic Film Festival, 75, 115
awards
  Academy Awards, USA, 22, 52, 74, 96, 152, 219
  Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films, 74–75, 96, 130, 194
  American Cinema Editors, 75, 130
  American Comedy Awards, 219
  American Film Institute, 44, 52, 75
  American Society of Cinematographers, 22, 52, 75
  Argentinean Film Critics Association Awards, 195
  Australian Film Institute, 52
  Avoriaz Fantastic Film Festival, 75, 115
  Berlin International Film Festival, 23, 52, 152, 172, 219
  Bodil Awards, 23, 52

awards, *cont.*
Boston Society of Film Critics Awards, 23, 75, 220
British Academy Awards, 23, 53, 75, 96, 133, 152
Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards, 75
Brussels International Festival of Fantasy Film, 115
Cannes Film Festival, 23, 53, 76, 96, 152, 173, 195
Caragena Film Festival, 23
Casting Society of America, 130
Catalonian International Film Festival, 115, 130, 173
Cesar Awards, 24, 53, 76, 96, 220
Chicago Film Critics Association Awards, 53, 76
Chicago Film Festival, 175
Cinema Writers Circle Awards, Spain, 153
Cinequest San Jose Film Festival, 115
Czech Film and Television Academy Awards, 76
David di Donatello Awards, 53, 76
Deauville Film Festival, 173
Directors Guild of America, 24, 76–77, 96, 220
Edgar Allan Poe Awards, 53
Emmy Awards, 24, 53
European Film Awards, 77
Fantasporto, 77, 115
Festroia-Troia International Film Festival, 24
FilmFest Hamburg, 97
Film Society of Lincoln Center, 24, 53, 97
Flanders International Film Festival, 24
Florida Film Festival, 130
Giffoni Film Festival, 77
Golden Globe Awards, 24, 54, 77, 97, 153, 220
Golden Satellite Awards, 77–78, 153, 195
Gotham Awards, 54
Hasty Pudding Theatricals, 78, 97
Independent Spirit Awards, 24, 54, 173
Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists, 25, 78, 153, 195
Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, 153
London Film Critics Awards, 78
London Film Critics Circle Awards, 25
Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards, 54, 78, 97, 130, 220
Malibu International Film Festival, 131
Michael Balcon Awards, 133
Mystfest, 173
NAACP Image Awards, 78
National Board of Review Awards, 25, 54, 78, 97, 153
National Society of Film Critics Awards, 25, 54, 78, 97
New York Film Critics Circle Awards, 54
Norwegian International Film Festival, 78
Online Film Critics Society Awards, 78
PGA Golden Laurel Awards, 78–79, 97
Razzie Awards, 220
Rembrandt Awards, 79
San Francisco International Film Festival, 97
São Paulo International Film Festival, 25
Screen Producers Guild, 31
ShoWest Convention Awards, 79, 97, 195, 220
Society of Motion Picture and Television Art Directors, 97
Southeastern Film Critics Association Awards, 25, 79
Tokyo International Film Festival, 153
Toronto Film Critics Association Awards, 79
U.S. Comedy Arts Festival, 220
Valladolid International Film Festival, 173
Venice Film Festival, 25, 54, 79, 97, 131
Writers Guild of America, 25, 55, 79, 173, 220
Young Artist Awards, 79

Back to the Future, 76
Baio, Scott, 136
Banderas, Antonio, 148
Bang the Drum Slowly, 35
Barry Lyndon, 47
Barrymore, Drew, 66, 112
Batman, 175, 182–185
Batman Returns, 175, 185–186
Battle Beyond the Stars, 124
Beatty, Warren, 7, 9, 210
Beetlejuice, 107, 175, 181–182
Berlin International Film Festival, 23, 52, 152, 172, 219
Bicycle Thief, The, 28
Big Gun, The, 118
Big Shave, The, 27
Bird, 86–87, 96, 97
Birdy, 142, 152
Black and Blue, 24
Black Cauldron, The, 175, 178
Bloody Mama, 32
Blue Collar, 155
Bodil Awards, 23, 52
Bogosian, Eric, 166
Bonanza, 1, 3
Born in the USA, 165
Boston Society of Film Critics Awards, 23, 75, 220
Boxcar Bertha, 27, 33–34, 123
Branagh, Kenneth, 16, 17
Breaking the Sound Barrier, 67
Breezy, 81
Brewster McCloud, 6–7, 12
Bridges of Madison County, The, 91–92, 96
Bringing Out the Dead, 49–50
British Academy Awards, 23, 53, 75, 96, 133, 152
British TV networks, 13
Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards, 75
Brooks, Mel, 30, 31, 197, 199
Brown, David, 61, 62, 149, 190
Brussels International Festival of Fantasy Film, 115
Bucket of Blood, 121
Buffalo Bill and the Indians, Or Sitting Bull's History Lesson, 11–12, 23
Bugsy, 210–211, 219, 220

Bugsy Malone, 133, 135, 136–137, 139, 152
Burton, Tim, 174–195
awards/nominations of, 175, 194–195
background of, 175–179
Batman, 175, 182–185
Batman Returns, 175, 185–186
Beetlejuice, 175, 181–182
Black Cauldron, The and, 175, 178
at Disney, 175, 177–180
Edward Scissorhands, 175, 187–188
Ed Wood, 175, 188–189, 194, 195
filmography of, 194
Fox and the Hound, The and, 175, 178
Frankenweenie, 179–180
Mars Attacks!, 175, 190–191, 195
on movie business, 192–193
Pee-wee's Big Adventure, 175, 180–181, 182
photo of, 174
Pinocchio, 179
Planet of the Apes (2001 release), 175, 193
Sleepy Hollow, 191–192, 194, 195
Tim Burton's Nightmare Before Christmas, 175
Vincent, 175, 179, 180

Cage, Nicolas, 50, 142
Caine Mutiny Court-Martial, The, 13
Calley, John, 36, 37
Cameron, James, 68, 118, 124–125
Campbell, Neve, 111
Cannes Film Festival, 23, 53, 76, 96, 152, 173, 195
Cape Fear, 45–46, 52
Caragena Film Festival, 23
Cara, Irene, 139
Carol Burnett Show, 197, 199
Carradine, David, 27, 33, 126
Carradine, Keith, 1, 10
Casino, 47–48, 54
Cassavetes, John, 30, 33, 34, 39, 83
Casting Society of America, 130
Catalonian International Film Festival, 115, 130, 173
Cat People, 162–163, 167
CBS, 81, 198–199
Cesar Awards, 24, 53, 76, 96, 220
Chicago Film Critics Association Awards, 53, 76
Chicago Film Festival, 175
Chicken and the Hawk, The, 5
Christmas Eve, 2
Cinema Writers Circle Awards, Spain, 153
Cineplex Odeon Group, 43
Cinequest San Jose Film Festival, 115
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, 63–64, 66, 74, 75, 77, 79
Close, Glenn, 18
Cocks, Jay, 33, 35, 40, 46, 47
Color of Money, The, 42–43
Color Purple, The, 66–67, 74, 76, 77
Columbia, 64
Combat, 1, 3
Come See the Paradise, 145–146, 147, 152
Commitments, The, 146–147, 152, 153
Connection, 30
Conrad, Bill, 3, 4
Cookie's Fortune, 18–19, 22, 23, 24
Coppola, Francis, 37, 124, 126, 136, 158, 170
Corman, Roger, 116–131
as actor, 126
awards/nominations of, 130–131
background of, 117, 118, 119, 120
Battle Beyond the Stars, 124
Big Gun, The, 118
Boxcar Bertha and, 27, 33, 34, 123
Bucket of Blood, 121
Dementia 13, 124
Eat My Dust, 123–124
exploitation films and, 120–121
Fall of the House of Usher, The, 122, 126
Fast and the Furious, The, 119, 120
filmography of, 128–130
Five Guns West, 120
Godfather II and, 126
Highway Dragnet, 117, 119
House in the Sea, The, 119
Intruder, The, 121
Little Shop of Horrors, 121, 123
Monster From the Ocean Floor, The, 117, 119
photo of, 116
Pit and the Pendulum, The, 122
production-distribution company of, 127
Scorsese and, 27, 32, 33, 34, 35
Unholy Rollers, 35
Von Richthofen and Brown, 122
Young Racers, The, 124
Countdown, 3–4
Cox, Courtney, 108, 112
Craven, Wes, 98–115
awards/nominations of, 115
background of, 99–100, 102
Beetlejuice and, 107
on casting, 106
Deadly Blessing, 103–104, 105
Deadly Friend, 107
on directing, 106–107
as editor, 103
50 Violins, 113
filmography of, 114
Haunting, The, 112
Hills Have Eyes II, The, 105
Hills Have Eyes, The, 103, 110, 115
Last House on the Left, 99, 102–103, 112
Mission Impossible and, 101
Music of the Heart, 99, 113
New Nightmare, 115
on *Nightmare* films of, 110
Nightmare on Elm Street, A, 99, 105, 107, 115
People Under the Stairs, The, 109–110, 115
photo of, 98
Scream, 99, 111–112
Serpent and the Rainbow, The, 99, 107–108
Shocker, 108–109, 115
Small Wonders, 112
Stranger in the House, A and, 104
Superman IV and, 107
Swamp Thing, 99, 104, 105
television and, 104
Together and, 102

Craven, Wes, *cont.*
Twilight Zone, The and, 109
Vampire in Brooklyn, 99, 110–111
Cruel World, 30
Cruise, Tom, 42, 208, 209
Czech Film and Television Academy Awards, 76

Dafoe, Willem, 42, 43
David di Donatello Awards, 53, 76
Deadly Blessing, 103–104, 105
Deadly Friend, 107
Death of a Salesman, 217
Deauville Film Festival, 173
Delinquents, The, 1, 3
Dementia 13, 124
Demme, Jonathan, 123, 125, 126
De Niro, Robert
Corman films and, 125
Levinson films and, 215
Parker films and, 143, 144
Scorsese films and, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 45–46, 47
De Palma, Brian, 33, 34, 35, 40, 158, 170
Depp, Johnny, 187, 191–192
Dern, Bruce, 119
Dern, Laura, 68, 93
Diner, 197, 198, 199–201, 207, 218, 219, 220
Dino, 49
Directors Guild of America, 17, 24, 76–77, 82, 96, 104, 220
Directors Guild of Great Britain, 133
Dirty Harry films, 85–86
Disclosure, 197, 213–214
Disney, 175, 177–180
Double Indemnity, 86
Dr. T and the Women, 19, 25
Dr. Zhivago, 8
Duel, 57, 59–60, 61, 62, 75
Duvall, Shelley, 1, 6, 10

Eastwood, Alison, 84
Eastwood, Clint, 80–97
on acting and directing, 84–85, 88–89
awards/nominations of, 96–97
background of, 81–82, 86
Bird, 86–87, 96, 97
Breezy, 81
Bridges of Madison County, The, 91–92, 96
on bringing films in on budget and on time, 88
Dirty Harry films, 85–86
Eiger Sanction, The, 81
For a Few Dollars More, 81
filmography of, 95
Fistful of Dollars, A, 81
The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly, 81
High Plains Drifter, The, 81, 91
In the Line of Fire, 86
Man with No Name trilogy and, 81
Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, 92–93
Outlaw Josey Wales, The, 81, 83–84
Pale Rider, 96
photo of, 80
Play Misty for Me, 81, 82, 83
Rawhide, 81, 82
Space Cowboys, 81, 94, 96
Sudden Impact, 85–86
television and, 81, 82, 84
True Crime, 93
Unforgiven, 86, 89–91, 94, 96, 97
White Hunter, Black Heart, 96
William Munny Killings, The and, 89–90
Eat My Dust, 123–124
Edgar Allan Poe Awards, 53
Edward Scissorhands, 175, 187–188
Ed Wood, 175, 188–189, 194, 195
Eiger Sanction, The, 81
Emmy Awards, 24, 53
Empire of the Sun, 32, 67, 76, 78
E.R., 68
Eric Clapton: Nothing But the Blues, 53
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, 57, 66, 67, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78
European Film Awards, 77
Evacuees, 135
Evita, 148–149, 150, 152, 153
Exorcist, The, 37

Faces, 30
Fall of the House of Usher, The, 122, 126
Fame, 139–140, 148, 152
Fantasporto, 77, 115
Fast and the Furious, The, 119, 120
Festroia-Troia International Film Festival, 24
50 Violins, 113
FilmFest Hamburg, 97
Film Society of Lincoln Center, 24, 53, 97
Firelight, 64
Fistful of Dollars, A, 81
Five Guns West, 120
Flanders International Film Festival, 24
Florida Film Festival, 130
Fool For Love, 15, 23, 24
For a Few Dollars More, 81
Ford, Harrison, 59, 72
Ford, John, 30, 206
Forever Mine, 170
Foster, Jodie, 27, 35–36, 136
Fox, 5, 187
Fox and the Hound, The, 175, 178
Frankenweenie, 179–180
Freeman, Morgan, 89, 90

Gallant Men, The, 3
Gangs of New York, 50
Gere, Richard, 138, 161, 162
Giffoni Film Festival, 77
Gilligan's Island, 189
Godfather II, 37, 38, 126
Goldblum, Jeff, 20
Golden Globe Awards, 24, 54, 77, 97, 153, 220
Golden Satellite Awards, 77–78, 153, 195
Goodfellas, 31, 43, 44–45, 48, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55
Good Morning, Vietnam, 197, 204–205
Gotham Awards, 54
Gould, Elliott, 4
Graduate, The, 217
Grifters, The, 54
Guber, Peter, 104, 137

Hackman, Gene, 90, 90–91, 144
Hanks, Tom, 49, 70, 71
Happy Days, 123
Hardcore, 160–161, 172
Hasty Pudding Theatricals, 78, 97
Haunting, The, 112
HBO, 168

Hershey, Barbara, 27, 33, 207
High Anxiety, 199
High Plains Drifter, The, 81, 91
Highway Dragnet, 117, 119
Hills Have Eyes II, The, 105
Hills Have Eyes, The, 103, 110, 115
Hitchcock, Alfred, 3, 30, 31, 83
Hoffman, Dustin, 207, 208, 215, 217
Honeymoon Killers, The, 32
Hopkins, Anthony, 147
Hot Lunch, 139
House in the Sea, The, 119
Howard, Ron, 121, 123, 124, 126

Images, 23, 25
Independent Spirit Awards, 24, 54, 173
Indiana Jones, 72
Industrial Light & Magic, 68, 203
In the Line of Fire, 86
Intruder, The, 121
Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists, 25, 78, 153, 195
It's Not Just You, Murray, 27, 30–31

Jaws, 62–63, 64, 75, 77, 120, 120–121
Jazz '34, 25
Jimmy Hollywood, 213
Jurassic Park, 57, 68–69, 74, 76, 79

Kael, Pauline, 156–157
Kansas City, 23
Kansas City Bomber, 35
Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, 153
Keaton, Diane, 84–85, 140
Keaton, Michael, 175, 181, 183, 184
Keitel, Harvey, 32, 35, 36, 45, 159, 160
Kellerman, Sally, 1, 6
Kennedy, Kathleen, 66, 91
King Kong, 68
King of Comedy, The, 41–42, 53
Kundun, 48–49, 50, 52

Ladd, Diane, 126
La Motta, Jake, 40, 41
Landau, Martin, 184, 189
Last House on the Left, 99, 102–103, 112
Last Temptation of Christ, The, 32, 42, 43, 49, 52, 155
Last Waltz, The, 40
Lean, David, 8, 67
Lemmon, Jack, 2
Leone, Sergio, 81, 82
Levinson, Barry, 196–220
  Avalon, 197, 198, 209–210, 218, 219, 220
  awards/nominations of, 219–220
  background of, 197–199, 217
  on Baltimore, 217
  Bugsy, 210–211, 219, 220
  on casting, 200
  Diner, 197, 198, 199–201, 207, 218, 219, 220
  Disclosure, 197, 213–214
  on film industry, 206
  filmography of, 218–219
  Good Morning, Vietnam, 197, 204–205
  High Anxiety, 199
  on Hoffman (Dustin), 217
  Jimmy Hollywood, 213
  Liberty Heights, 198, 217
  Natural, The, 201–202, 218
  photo of, 196
  Rain Man, 197, 207–209, 217, 218, 219, 220
  Silent Movie, 199, 220
  Sleepers, 214–215
  Sphere, 197, 216–217
  television and, 197, 198, 198–199
  Tin Men, 198, 207
  Toys, 212, 219, 220
  Wag the Dog, 197, 215–216, 219
  on writing and directing, 203
  Young Sherlock Holmes, 68, 202–203
Lewis, Danny, 47
Liberty Heights, 198
Light of Day, 165–166, 167
Light Sleeper, 167, 168, 172, 173
Liotta, Ray, 44, 45
Little Shop of Horrors, 121, 123
Loman and Barkley Show, 197, 198
London Film Critics Awards, 78
London Film Critics Circle Awards, 25
Los Angeles Film Critics Association Awards, 54, 78, 97, 130, 220
Lucas, George, 33, 65, 67
Lust for Life, 13

Madonna, 113, 149
Malibu International Film Festival, 131
Mamet, David, 215
Mantegna, Joe, 210
Man with No Name trilogy, 81
Marceau, Marcel, 199
Marie, Lisa, 188
Mars Attacks!, 175, 190–191, 195
Marty Feldman Show, 197
*M*A*S*H*, 1, 4, 5–6, 7, 22, 23, 24
McCabe & Mrs. Miller, 7–9, 12, 25
Meaney, Colm, 146
Mean Streets, 31, 34–36, 37, 39, 45, 48, 50, 55
Melody, 135
MGM, 200, 201
Midnight Cowboy, 217
Midnight Express, 137–139, 152, 153
Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil, 92–93
Mills, Donna, 83
Minnie and Moskowitz, 33
Miramax, 112
Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters, 163–165, 173
Mission Impossible, 101
Mississippi Burning, 144–145, 146, 147, 152, 153
Mitchum, Robert, 46, 84, 158
Mol, Gretchen, 170
Monster From the Ocean Floor, The, 117, 119
Monterey Pop, 101
Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle, 24
Muren, Dennis, 68, 69
Murphy, Eddie, 110–111
Music of the Heart, 99, 113
Mystfest, 173

NAACP Image Awards, 78
Nashville, 10, 12, 22, 23, 24, 25
National Board of Review Awards, 25, 54, 78, 97, 153

National Society of Film Critics Awards, 25, 54, 78, 97
Natural, The, 201–202, 218
NBC, 15, 68
Newman, Paul, 11–12, 42, 46
New Nightmare, 115
New World Pictures, 123, 127
New York Film Critics Circle Awards, 54
New York, New York, 38–39
Nicholson, Jack, 125–126, 184, 190–191
Nicholson, Jim, 120, 122
Night Gallery, 59
Nightmare of Ecstasy (Grey), 188
Nightmare on Elm Street, A, 99, 105, 107, 115
No Hard Feelings, 135
Norwegian International Film Festival, 78
Nutty Professor, 111

Obsession, 170
Online Film Critics Society Awards, 78
On the Waterfront, 48
Open City, 28
Outlaw Josey Wales, The, 81, 83–84

Pacific Heights, 167
Paisan, 28
Pale Rider, 96
Parker, Alan, 132–153
  Angela's Ashes, 133, 149–150, 153
  Angel Heart, 143–144
  awards/nominations of, 133, 152–153
  background of, 133–134
  Birdy, 142, 152
  Bugsy Malone, 133, 135, 136–137, 139, 152
  Come See the Paradise, 145–146, 147, 152
  Commitments, The, 146–147, 152, 153
  Evacuees, 135
  Evita, 148–149, 150, 152, 153
  Fame, 139–140, 148, 152
  filmography of, 151–152
  Hot Lunch and, 139
  Melody, 135
  Midnight Express, 137–139, 152, 153
  Mississippi Burning, 144–145, 146, 147, 152, 153
  No Hard Feelings, 135
  photo of, 132
  Pink Floyd: The Wall, 141
  Road to Wellville, The, 147
  Shoot the Moon, 140–141, 152
  television and, 135
Parker, Sarah Jessica, 190
Passage to India, 67
Patton, 5
Patty Hearst, 166, 173
Peckinpah, Sam, 70
Pee-wee's Big Adventure, 175, 180–181, 182
People Under the Stairs, The, 109–110, 115
Pesci, Joe, 43, 44, 45
Pfeiffer, Michelle, 47, 185–186
PGA Golden Laurel Awards, 78–79, 97
Phillips, Julia, 34, 35, 36, 63, 158
Phillips, Michael, 34, 35, 36, 63, 158
Pileggi, Nick, 43, 49
Pink Flamingos, 105
Pink Floyd: The Wall, 141
Pinocchio, 179
Pit and the Pendulum, The, 122
Planet of the Apes (2001 release), 175, 193
Platoon, 43
Player, The, 14–15, 22, 23, 24, 25
Play Misty for Me, 81, 82, 83
Pollack, Sydney, 155, 158
Polygram Pictures, 16, 17
Popeye, 12–13
Price, Vincent, 126, 175, 179, 187
Pryor, Richard, 159, 160
Pullman, Bill, 107
Puttnam, David, 135, 137

Raging Bull, 39–41, 44, 45, 48, 50, 52, 54, 155
Raiders of the Lost Ark, 65, 74, 75, 77
Rain Man, 197, 207–209, 217, 218, 219, 220
Ranger Howl, The, 198
Razzie Awards, 220
Redford, Robert, 158, 201, 202
Reefer Madness, 105
Reiser, Paul, 199, 200
Rembrandt Awards, 79
Remsen, Bert, 1, 10
Republic Studios, 65
Reubens, Paul, 180
Road to Wellville, The, 147
Roaring Twenties, The, 31
Rourke, Mickey, 143, 144
Rudin, Scott, 49, 149

San Francisco International Film Festival, 97
São Paulo International Film Festival, 25
Saving Private Ryan, 57, 71, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79
Schindler's List, 57, 69–70, 71, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79
Schlesinger, John, 166, 167
Schrader, Paul, 154–173
  Affliction, 155, 167, 168, 169–170, 173
  American Gigolo, 159, 161
  awards/nominations of, 155, 172–173
  background of, 155–158
  Blue Collar, 155, 159–160
  Born in the USA and, 165
  Bringing Out the Dead and, 50
  on casting, 167
  Cat People, 162–163, 167
  Comfort of Strangers, The, 166–167
  on directing, 158
  on film industry, 170–171
  filmography of, 172
  Forever Mine, 170
  Hardcore, 160–161, 172
  Kael (Pauline) and, 156–157
  Last Temptation of Christ, The and, 155
  Light of Day, 165–166, 167
  Light Sleeper, 167, 168, 172, 173
  Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters, 163–164, 173
  Obsession, 170
  Patty Hearst, 166, 173
  photo of, 154
  Raging Bull and, 40, 155
  Sisters and, 158
  Taxi Driver and, 34, 35, 36, 155, 157, 158, 161, 168, 169
  television and, 159, 168, 170
  Touch, 168–169, 173
  Witch Hunt, 168

on working with animals, 163
on writing, 158, 167
Yakuza, The, 155, 157–158
Schuck, John, 1, 10
Scorsese, Martin, 26–55
After Hours, 42, 53, 54
Age of Innocence, The, 46–47, 50, 52, 54
Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore, 37, 39, 50, 53
awards/nominations of, 31, 52–55
background of, 27–29, 31, 48
Barry Lyndon and, 47
Bicycle Thief, The and, 28
Big Shave, The, 27
Bloody Mama and, 32
Boxcar Bertha, 27, 33–34, 123
Bringing Out the Dead, 49–50
Cape Fear, 45–46, 52
Casino, 47–48, 54
Color of Money, The, 42–43
Connection and, 30
Cruel World and, 30
Dino, 49
as editor, 32
Eric Clapton: Nothing But the Blues and, 53
Faces and, 30
filmography of, 51–52
on film reviews, 39
film school and, 29, 31
Gangs of New York, 50
Godfather II and, 38
Goodfellas, 31, 43, 44–45, 48, 50, 52, 53, 54, 55
Grifters, The and, 54
Honeymoon Killers, The, 32
It's Not Just You, Murray, 27, 30–31
King of Comedy, The, 41–42, 53
Kundun, 48–49, 50, 52
Last Temptation of Christ, The, 32, 42, 43, 49, 52, 155
Last Waltz, The, 40
Mean Streets, 31, 34–36, 37, 39, 45, 48, 50, 55
Minnie and Moskowitz, 33
New York, New York, 38–39
Open City and, 28
Paisan and, 28
parents of, 45
photo of, 26
Raging Bull, 39–41, 44, 45, 48, 50, 52, 54, 155
Roaring Twenties, The and, 31
Season of the Witch (later *Mean Streets*), 34
Shadows in the Streets of New York and, 30
Shoeshine and, 28
Street Scenes, 27
student films of, 27, 30–31, 45
Taxi Driver, 34–36, 36–37, 39, 45, 48, 50, 53, 54, 136, 155, 158
television and, 30
Unholy Rollers and, 35
On the Waterfront and, 48
What's a Nice Girl like You Doing in a Place Like This?, 30, 31
Who's That Knocking at My Door?, 27, 32, 33
Woodstock, 32, 40
Yakuza and, 34
Scream, 99, 111–112
Screen Producers Guild, 31
Season of the Witch (later *Mean Streets*), 34
Secret Honor, 23
Serpent and the Rainbow, The, 99, 107–108
Shadows in the Streets of New York, 30
Shea, Bob, 105, 110
Shienberg, Sid, 59, 60
Shocker, 108–109, 115
Shoeshine, 28
Shoot the Moon, 140–141, 152
Short Cuts, 14, 15, 22, 23, 24, 25
ShoWest Convention Awards, 79, 97, 195, 220
Siegel, Don, 82, 83
Silent Movie, 199, 220
Sinatra, Nancy, 120
Sinbad, 68
Sisters, 158
Sleepers, 214–215
Sleepy Hollow, 191–192, 194, 195
Small Wonders, 112
Snow White, 178
Society of Motion Picture and Television Art Directors, 97
Some Like It Hot, 86
Something Wild, 44
Southeastern Film Critics Association Awards, 25, 79
Space Cowboys, 81, 94, 96
Sphere, 197, 216–217
Spielberg, Steven, 56–79
Amblin, 57
Amistad, 70, 76, 77, 78, 79
awards/nominations of, 74–79
background of, 57, 58–59, 61, 72
Back to the Future, 76
Breaking the Sound Barrier and, 67
Bridges of Madison County, The and, 91
Cape Fear and, 45–46
Close Encounters of the Third Kind, 63–64, 66, 74, 75, 77, 79
Color Purple, The, 66–67, 74, 76, 77
Duel, 57, 59–60, 61, 62, 75
Empire of the Sun, 32, 67, 76, 78
E.R and, 68
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, 57, 66, 67, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78
filmography of, 73–74
film school and, 58–59
Firelight and, 64
Indiana Jones and, 72
Jaws, 62–63, 64, 75, 77, 120–121
Jaws and, 120
Jurassic Park, 57, 68–69, 74, 76, 79
Passage to India and, 67
photo of, 56
Raiders of the Lost Ark, 65, 74, 75, 77
Saving Private Ryan, 57, 71, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79
Schindler's List, 57, 69–70, 71, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79
student films of, 57
Sugarland Express, The, 60–62, 76, 79
television and, 59–60, 68
Twilight Zone, The Movie, 77
Young Sherlock Holmes, 68
Star Wars, 65
Starz! Cable Network, 170
Steiger, Rod, 14

Stone, Sharon, 48, 104
Stranger in the House, A, 104
Streep, Meryl, 92, 113
Street Scenes, 27
Sudden Impact, 85–86
Sugarland Express, The, 60–62, 76, 79
Sunset Boulevard, 86
Superman IV, 107
Swamp Thing, 99, 104, 105

Taxi Driver, 34–36, 36–37, 39, 45, 48, 50, 53, 54, 136, 155, 157, 158, 162, 168, 169
television
  Altman and, 1–2, 3, 4, 6, 13–14
  Carol Burnett Show, 197, 199
  Craven and, 104
  Duel, 59–60
  Eastwood and, 81, 84
  E.R., 68
  Gilligan's Island, 189
  Happy Days, 123
  Levinson and, 197, 198, 198–199
  Loman and Barkley Show, 197, 198
  Marty Feldman Show, 197
  Night Gallery, 59
  Parker and, 135
  Ranger Howl, The, 198
  Rawhide, 81, 82
  Schrader and, 159, 168, 170
  Scorsese and, 28–29, 30
  Spielberg and, 59–60, 68
  Stranger in the House, 104
  Tim Conway Show, 197
  Twilight Zone, The, 109
Terminator, 69
Texas Chainsaw Massacre, 106
That Cold Day in the Park, 4–5
The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly, 81
Thieves Like Us, 9, 10
3 Women, 23
THX, 33
Tim Burton's Nightmare Before Christmas, 175
Tim Conway Show, 197
Tin Men, 198, 207
Together, 102
Tokyo International Film Festival, 153
Tomlin, Lily, 1, 15
Top Gun, 42
Tora, Tora, Tora, 5
Toronto Film Critics Association Awards, 79
Touch, 168–169, 173
Towne, Bob, 121, 124, 158
Toys, 212, 219, 220
True Crime, 93
Twilight Zone, The, 109
Twilight Zone, The Movie, 77

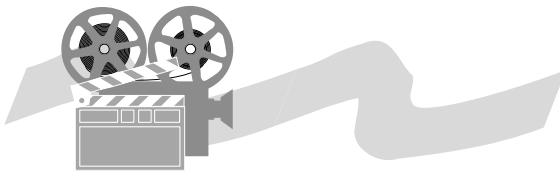
Unforgiven, 86, 89–91, 94, 96, 97
Unholy Rollers, 35
United Artists, 10, 43
Universal, 58, 60, 108, 137
U.S. Comedy Arts Festival, 220

Valladolid International Film Festival, 173
Vampire in Brooklyn, 99, 110–111
Venice Film Festival, 25, 54, 79, 97, 131
Vincent, 175, 179, 180
Vincent & Theo, 13–14
Von Richthofen and Brown, 122

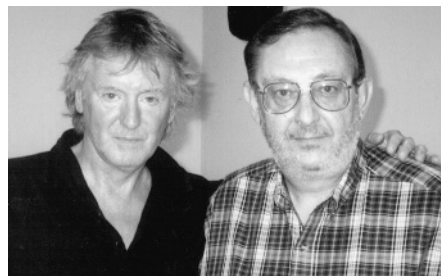
Wag the Dog, 197, 215–216, 219
Walk on the Moon, A, 113
Warner Bros.
  Altman and, 3–4, 8, 9
  Burton and, 180, 186, 187, 193
  Eastwood and, 87, 89, 91
  Scorsese and, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37
  Spielberg and, 67
Wedding, A, 23, 25
Weintraub, Fred, 32, 33
Welles, Orson, 30, 82, 84
What's a Nice Girl like You Doing in a Place Like This?, 30
Whirlybirds, 3
White Hunter, Black Heart, 96
Who's That Knocking at My Door?, 27, 32, 33
William Munny Killings, The, 89–90
Williams, Robin, 12, 203, 204, 205, 211
Witch Hunt, 168
Wizard of Oz, 193
Wiz, The, 137
Woodstock, 32, 40
Writers Guild of America, 25, 55, 79, 173, 220

Yakuza, The, 34, 155, 157–158
Young Artist Awards, 79
Young Racers, The, 124
Young Sherlock Holmes, 68, 202–203

Zanuck, Lili, 91, 93
Zanuck, Richard D., 61, 62, 93



About the Author



Robert Emery (right) with director Adrian Lyne.

President and CEO of Media Entertainment, Inc., Robert J. Emery has been a writer-producer-director for thirty-six years. He has written and produced a wide variety of screenplays and television shows, has taught film production, and has been the recipient of more than eighty industry awards for his work. He wrote, produced, and directed the 2001 feature film Swimming Upstream. The movie received the Best Dramatic Feature award at the 2001 Angel Citi Film Festival in Los Angeles. His four-part documentary on the history of genocide, The Genocide Factor, aired on PBS stations nationwide in April of 2002. The project was awarded the Remi Special Jury Award for TV Series—Documentary from the Worldfest-Houston International Film Festival. Mr. Emery is a member of the Directors Guild of America.